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TORONTO

MILTON

BY

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ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

"O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D INVENTOR OF HARMONIES,
O SKILL'D TO SING OF TIME OR ETERNITY,
GOD-GIFTED ORGAN-VOICE OF ENGLAND,
MILTON, A NAME TO RESOUND FOR AGES;
WHOSE TITAN ANGELS, GABRIEL, ABDIEL,
STARR'D FROM JEHOVAH'S GORGEOUS ARMOURIES,
TOWER, AS THE DEEP-DOMED EMPYRÉAN
RINGS TO THE ROAR OF AN ANGEL ONSET—
ME RATHER ALL THAT BOWERY LONELINESS,
THE BROOKS OF EDEN MAZILY MURMURING,
AND BLOOM PROFUSE AND CEDAR ARCHES
CHARM, AS A WANDERER OUT IN OCEAN,
WHERE SOME REFULGENT SUNSET OF INDIA
STREAMS O'ER A RICH AMBROSIAL OCEAN ISLE,
AND CRIMSON-HUED THE STATELY PALMWOODS
WHISPER IN ODOROUS HEIGHTS OF EVEN"

Tennyson

First Edition, 1881.
Reprinted, 1902, 1909, 1911, 1914, 1915 (*thrice*).

MILTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY LIFE OF MILTON.

Birth of Milton.—Bread Street, in the City of London, as one turns out of Cheapside, was famous *in Queen Elizabeth's days for its Mermaid Tavern,* where Shakspere, Beaumont, and their fellows met to drink canary wine, and to put "each their whole wit into a jest." Not far from its doors, though on the other side of the way, at the sign of the Spread Eagle —the device of the Milton family—John Milton, the poet, was born, on Friday, December 9, 1608, some eight years before Shakspere's death He was baptized in All Hallows Church, in the same street, December 20th; and his name still stands on the register which was saved when the church itself was destroyed in the Great Fire. The boy lived in his father's house for sixteen years, and may often have seen the figures of the great poets after their carousing, go gaily down the street, and "tasted the air they left behind them" It pleases our fancy to think that the shadow of Shakspere may have fallen on Milton's eager face and the Master of English Drama touched the Master of English Epic.

His Parentage.—Richard Milton, the poet's grandfather, was one of a Roman Catholic family in the rank of yeomen, whom we can trace occupying land near Oxford as far back as 1550. He clung to his religion and was fined, as we know from the Recusant Rolls for Oxfordshire, for refusing to attend his parish church. But his son, John Milton, the poet's father, left the faith of his ancestors, and became

a Protestant. Exiled from his home, he took refuge in London, where he set up as a scrivener, in a business which united a great part of the work done now by attorneys and law-stationers. About 1600 he married Sara, whose maiden name is variously given as Bradshaw, Haughton, or Caston, a woman of excellent charity, and had six children, of whom three died in childhood. Of the other three the eldest was Anne, afterwards Mrs. Phillips, and by a second marriage Mrs. Agar: the second was the poet: and the third, Christopher Milton, born in 1615, became a judge and was knighted. The father must have prospered, for he sent his two sons to Cambridge, and he retired in 1632 to Horton, near Windsor. His grave Puritanism was of that earlier type which still loved the arts, and wished more for the reformation of the Church than its overthrow. He destined his son for the Church, he employed Cornelius Jansen to make a portrait of the boy at ten years old, and he was himself so skilled a musician that in 1601 we find him one of a band who published twenty-one madrigals on the *Triumphs of Oriana*, and later on as the composer of some tunes in a book of psalms, two of which, *York* and *Norwich*, are still popular. From Horton he followed his son's college career with interest, and though he appears to have remonstrated with him because he was giving up his life wholly to poetry and literature, the remonstrance seems to have been slight. Milton's Latin poem in answer declares that his father only pretends to hate the Muses, thanks him for "not sending him where the way lay open for piling up money," and is a half-laughing expression of his belief that his "dear father" did not really mean his blame. It is quite plain that no one could have been more proud of a son, or more indulgent of his literary leisure. At the age of thirty-two Milton had not earned a sixpence.

His Education. St. Paul's School, 1620-1625.—When Milton was a boy, drest as his picture shows him, in a close-fitting black-braided dress, and

with a lace frill round his throat, he had in his own words, "by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues and some sciences as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and the schools." His quickness and parts soon showed themselves; and we hear from Aubrey[1] that at eleven years old he was already a poet Before he went to school, and while he was there, Thomas Young, afterwards a well-known Puritan divine and one of the authors of *Smectymnuus*, was his tutor. "Under his guidance," Milton says, in a Latin elegy, "I penetrated into the recesses of the Muses, saw the sacred and green places of Parnassus, and drank the Pierian cups," describing in this lofty manner the fact that Young first led him to make verses. In 1622, when Young left England, Milton had been at St. Paul's School for about two years under Mr. Gill, the head-master and his son Alexander Gill, and remained with them for four years, from 1620 to 1624–5. The father knew English poetry well, and part of his book *Logonomia Anglica*—a treatise on etymology, syntax, prosody, and kindred subjects—is full of examples taken from the English poets. It is probable that the boy read many of the well known poems of his time while still at school, and perhaps possessed a copy of that Folio-Shakspere published in 1623 of which we know he made use before 1630. At any rate, he knew his Spenser, and had carefully read Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' *Divine Weeks and Words*, a poem on the Creation and the Fall, and the sacred history of the world We find their influence, and it is supposed the influence of others, in the first poems we possess from Milton's hand,

[1] John Aubrey, the antiquarian, 1626–97, knew Milton and wrote a memoir of him Another memoir of Aubrey's was embodied by Anthony Wood in the *Fasti Oxonienses* (1691–2) And the last of these earliest sources of information on Milton's life is Edward Phillips' Memoir, 1694. Phillips was Milton's nephew and pupil

"done by him at fifteen years old," a par of Psalm cxiv., and another of Psalm cxxxvi. have been praised, and the latter Psalm ha of his melody, but I am inclined to agre Johnson's half-contemptuous phrase. "They r great expectations; they would in any nu school have obtained praise, but not excited w Along with this English training he became a and Greek scholar, till he was "full ripe for mical training." We may conjecture from a written to Young in 1625, and acknowledgi gift of a Hebrew Bible, that he had already l some Hebrew, and either now, or later at c he had by his father's advice added to the a tongues French and Italian—"the flowers are the boast of Gaul, and the speech which th Italian, attesting the barbarian inroads by his di pours from his degenerate mouth." His inter Italian may have been stirred by the friendship even at school he formed with Charles Di nephew of that Giovanni Diodati, who made the I version of the Scriptures in 1607; a friendship lasted unbroken until death dissolved its union bi its love. The ardour which he gave to friendsh gave also to his work. Aubrey, Wood, and Pl all bear witness to his "indefatigable study,' "prompt wit and insuperable industry;" and hi account of his toils at school fitly closes the ac of this part of his life.

"My father destined me while yet a little b the study of humane letters, which I seized wit eagerness, that from the twelfth year of my scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed midnight; which indeed was the first cause of to my eyes, to whose natural weakness ther also added frequent headaches. All which tarding my impetuosity in learning, he caused be daily instructed, both at the grammar-sch under other masters at home, and then whe acquired various tongues, and also not som

nificant taste for the sweetness of philosophy, he sent me to Cambridge."

Life at Cambridge. — Milton went up to Cambridge and was enrolled as a lesser pensioner of Christ's College under the tutorship of William Chappell, afterwards Dean of Cashel and Bishop of Cork, on the 12th February, 1624, that is, according to our reckoning, in 1625. He remained a little more than seven years in the university, till July, 1632, when he left it, a Master of Arts, at the age of twenty-three. The rooms "honoured by Milton's name" are still pointed out: the first-floor rooms on the first stair on the left hand side of the court near the gate, and his presence dwelt about the place for Wordsworth—

> "Yea, our blind Poet, [illegible]

The lines well introduce the image of the youth and the image of his mind during his college life. Immediately after his enrolment he returned to London, and describes himself as "in the midst of town distractions; not, as usual, surrounded with books." The day after this letter King James died, 27th March, 1625, and twelve days after Milton matriculated at Cambridge. We may say then that his literary life began with the accession of Charles I.

1626.—The spring of 1626 found Milton hard at work, "tied night and day to his books," but a quarrel with his tutor sent him, in a kind of rustication, to London, till, before the end of the Easter term, the matter was arranged, and on his return he exchanged the tutorship of Chappell for that of Tovey. That

ıarrel was supposed to have been aggravated by a ıipping received from Chappell, because over the ords "some unkindness" contained in a note erived by Aubrey from Christopher Milton, there is ıe interlineation "whipt him." But though Johnson ence assumes that Milton was one of the last tudents at either university who suffered the public ndignity of corporal punishment, there is no further proof of it. Milton's words to his friend Diodati in he spring of 1626 are full of offended dignity: "At present I care not to revisit the reedy Cam, nor does regret for my forbidden rooms grieve me. Nor am I now in the humour to bear the threats of a harsh master, and other things intolerable to my disposition. If this be exile . . . . then I refuse neither the name nor the lot of a runaway, and gladly I enjoy my state of banishment." In the same elegy he describes his life in London, and it is not that of the starched Puritan. The "pomp of the theatre" and the "garrulous stage" or "furious tragedy" drew him forth. "The thick elms and the troops of maidens, virgins of Britain to whom the first glory is due," delighted him more than "the hoarse murmuring school" by the banks of Cam, and the "naked fields," that "ill suit the votaries of Apollo."

It was during this visit that Milton's first original poem in English was written—*On the Death of a Fair Infant*—the daughter of Mrs. Phillips, and his niece; and he alludes in it to the plague now raging in London. Before the year ended he had written two Latin elegies on the deaths of the Bishops of Winchester and Ely, and both are marked, even though their thoughts are commonplace, by the soaring rapture with which he always entered on the description of the vision of heaven. The Bishop of Winchester was Lancelot Andrewes. It illustrates the great change that passed over Milton that in the *Reason of Church-government* (1641) he attacks the very man he now so highly praised. The same year produced two more Latin elegies—on the medical Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Gostlin,

and on the University Bedel, Richard Ridding, with a long Latin poem on the Gunpowder Plot.

1627 is only marked by a metrical letter to Young, in which Milton hopes that his old master will soon return from Hamburg to the joys of his native land. Next year the hope was fulfilled, and Young came back to be Vicar of Stowmarket. It is said that Milton not only kept the promise he makes in July 1628 of visiting Young, but also that he visited him frequently.

In 1628 he wrote a Latin poem for a fellow of his College who had to be respondent in one of the philosophical disputations then practised, on the thesis [illegible]

[illegible]

sent, at a glance, unaccustomed pain into his heart "I inly burn in love," he cries; "I am all one flame; meanwhile she who alone pleased me was snatched away from my eyes never to return." The rhetorical elegy that tells this story and dwells on his passion makes us feel that there was nothing in it. Eighteen [illegible]

[illegible] and a letter to Alexander Gill declares his intention to spend the vacation in deep literary repose, and to hide himself among the bowers of the Muses. But this was interrupted by a call to deliver an oratorical exercise in his College at the annual university frolic of the students

Prolusiones Oratoriæ. — The seven Latin [illegible]

[illegible] 1674 The *first* of these is on the question whether Day or Night is most excellent. It has a faint vein of humour, a strong

n of love of nature, and an allusion to the fact of unpopularity in the College. The *second* is a ort essay on the Music of the Spheres, which was t a symbol of the harmony of Law in the Heavens; ut if we "carried pure and snow clean hearts, then hould our ears sound and be filled with that most weet music of the ever-wheeling stars." The *third* s an attack on the Scholastic Philosophy as at once useless and irritating, and is of interest here, for it goes to prove that he supported the study of facts as the ground of knowledge, and was discontented, as his prose works prove he continued to be, with the methods of teaching at the universities. The *fourth* and *fifth* are metaphysical discussions of no interest even to Milton; and the seventh will hereafter be mentioned. The *sixth*, which is the oratorical exercise mentioned above, was an address, half in earnest, half in ponderous fun, on the subject that "sportive exercises are not always in the way of philosophical studies." Its literary interest lies in this—that the lines entitled *At a Vacation Exercise*, and published among his English poems, form part of it, and that already we find here the poet who did not care to use his powers on light or festive subjects or jests, "in which I do acknowledge my faculty to be very slight," but on graver ones—

> "Such where the deep transported mind may soar
> Above the wheeling poles; and at Heaven's door
> Look in, and see each blissful Deity."

The biographical interest is in the proof it gives t during the first years of his university course th were many who, "on account of disagreements in studies, were altogether of an unfriendly and a spirit" towards him; but that now this quarrel entirely made up, and that he was "pervaded pleasure" at finding himself and his powers fr acknowledged by the University.

1629.—The next year, March, 1629, he to degree of Bachelor of Arts, and signed "willing

ex animo" the three articles of assent to the Articles, the Common Prayer, and the King's Supremacy. Immediately after, his Latin poem, on the Approach of Spring, is full of youthful ardour, and rings with the joy the youth felt in the new life of Nature and in the love that Spring stirs within the world and man. But though it celebrates love almost in the manner of his favourite Ovid, and sets Milton far apart from his later Puritan gravity, it does not represent in any way his deeper thoughts or the ground of his character as a young man. That is done in the sixth elegy, written to "Diodati, residing in the Country," immediately after Christmas, 1629. In the beginning we find the Milton of the Renaissance lightly reproving his friend for thinking that festivity and poetry cannot go together. Song loves Bacchus, and Bacchus loves song. Ovid's verses in exile were bad because there were no dainties and no wine. Have you not music to inspire you? the harp touched by nimble hands, and the lute that times the fair ones as they dance in the tapestried hall? Light elegy is the care of many Gods; and its poets may drink good old wine.

This is one side of Milton; but his sympathy with these pleasures was a distant one, he could feel with them, but he did not feel them in his deeper self, and when they appear as in *L'Allegro*, they are modified by his native gravity and holiness to a quiet delight in those beautiful things which had with them purity and temperance. The other and the stronger side of the man appears in the elegy when he speaks of his own aspirations as a poet—He who sings the holy decrees of the gods and pious heroes and the heaven of Jove, let him live sparely, let herbs be his harmless food, and clear water from a beechen cup give him a sober draught. Let his youth be chaste and free from sin, his morals rigid and his hand stainless. So lived Orpheus and Homer For the poet is dedicated to the gods and is their priest. This is the truer Milton—and the noble thoughts

well introduce the poem which he sent with this letter to his friend Diodati; the *Ode on the Morning of the Nativity*. "It is a gift," he says, "I have presented to Christ's natal day. On that very morning, at daybreak, it was first conceived."

1630.—The following January saw the birth of the *Ode on the Circumcision*, and about the same period we may date the pieces entitled *On Time* and *At a Solemn Musick*, and at Easter, the fragment called *The Passion*, "a subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left unfinished." That Easter term and the following autumn were made desolate in Cambridge by the fierce descent of the plague upon the town, and Milton's voice is only heard during the rest of the year in his epitaph on Shakspere, which being inserted in 1632 among other verses, in the second folio edition of Shakspere, was the first poem of his that appeared in print.

1631 opens with the two epitaphs on Hobson, the university carrier, and in Easter term was made the epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, a graceful tribute to one whom Ben Jonson praised with his rough power in an elegy in the *Underwoods*. The summer was passed in the country, "among groves and rivers, and under the beloved village elms, where I had supreme delight with the Muses."

1632 was his last year at Cambridge. The sonnet "On Attaining the Age of Twenty-three," was probably written in January, and he closed his academic course with an oration, delivered when he took his Master's degree and again subscribed the three articles of Assent at the Commencement held on July 3. It is the *seventh* of the *Prolusiones Oratoriæ*, and a noble address on the subject—That Knowledge makes Men happier than Ignorance—and it is full of the enthusiasm of one who in his college course had felt the truth of which he spoke; whose soul, "not content with this darksome prison-house, had reached out far and wide, till it filled the world itself and space

beyond that, in the divine expatiation of its magnitude," and who had, in his devotion to knowledge, "by living modestly and temperately, tamed the first impulses of fierce youth, and by reason and constancy of study had kept the heavenly strength of the mind pure and stainless" It was thus he had lived, and when he left Cambridge, he had conquered his early unpopularity. He was now "loved and admired by the whole university, particularly by the Fellows and most ingenious persons of his House." Moreover he bears his own witness to his college repute ten years after in the *Defensio Secunda*, saying that he had "more than ordinary respect, above any of his equals," from the Fellows of his college, who wished him to stay, and "wrote him many letters, then and afterwards, full of a singular affection." In spite of his literary ardour, he did the ordinary work of the college with resolute activity. It is Wood's statement that as at school so at Cambridge, "'twas usual with him to sit up till midnight at his book, which was the first thing that brought his eyes into the danger of blindness. By his indefatigable study he profited exceedingly—performed the academical exercises to the admiration of all, and was esteemed a virtuous and sober person, *yet not to be ignorant of his own parts;*" a phrase which suggests that even at Cambridge Milton had that deliberate self-confidence and esteem which was one of his marked characteristics, and which arose in a great degree out of an individuality unweakened by any sense of shame for wrong, strengthened daily by the knowledge of his own faithfulness to right Nor was his personal charm less than his intellectual power He was of middle height, his complexion exceeding fair and of delicate colour, his voice delicate and tunable. Dark gray eyes and auburn hair falling on his shoulders went with an oval face, and though there was so much of the woman in his look that he was called "the lady of Christ's," yet ' was erect and manly, and his figure not so ve

but that, armed with his sword, in which he had daily practice, he thought himself a match for any one. He moved so that men said he had courage and undauntedness, and the quaintness of his own statement that, so far as he knew, he had never been thought ugly by any one who had seen him, is fully borne out by Aubrey's saying that he "lodged a harmonical and ingenious soul in a beautiful and well-proportioned body."

The College Poems.—The temper in which these poems were written, its ideality, its seriousness, the religious grandeur and loud angelic trumpet-note of some of them, their love of music and of high philosophy as the music of the soul, is best discovered in some of the words he uses when, in 1642, he gave an account of his youth, its studies and its aspirations. At first his favourite authors were the smooth elegiac poets. But though applauding their art, he deplored the men, and turned in preference to the "two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts without transgression. And long it was not after when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things." "Next—for, hear me out now, readers, that I may tell you whither my younger feet wandered—I betock me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had a renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend, to the expense of his best blood or of his life, the honour and chastity of virgin and matron. From whence even then I learnt what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn. Only this my mind gave me that every free and gentle spirit

ought to be born a knight. Thus from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years, and the ceaseless round of study and reading, led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato and his equal Xenophon. Where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love—I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue" (he repeats the motive of Comus), "which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy; the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion which a certain sorceress, the abuser of Love's name, carries about—and how the first and chiefest office of Love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, Knowledge and Virtue—with such abstracted subli-

Infant, is like the first poetry of young men, imitative. The first stanza recalls Shakspere, the rest, till near the end, Spenser...

...nyinm; and the classical allusions, which are sometimes absurdly out of tune with the subject, and already exhibit one of Milton's faults—the want of proportion between the thought and its illustration—are done also in Spenser's way. In the middle of the poem Milton himself is heard in such lines as, *Whether above that high first-moving sphere*, and *Or that crowned Matron, sage, white-robed Truth*, and still more vigorously at the end of the ninth stanza, till, in the two last, imitation and classicism are wholly fr... the youthful ...onal sin, with ...ublime. The *...ation Exercise* was written two years later. This is remarkable for its invocation to his native

tongue, whose service he means to use in some graver subject. He seems to say that the later Elizabethan poetry had been spoiled by

> " . . . Those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight
> Which takes our late fantastics with delight."

He commands English to clothe itself in the rich robes and gay attire,

> " Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire ;"

and he proceeds at once to give an example in the first fine Miltonic outburst we have (lines 33, &c.) in which the voice doomed to sound forth majestic things is heard. And we find here, already, his epic aspiration. He hopes to sing hereafter of the gods, of the heavens, and of the secret things that came to pass when nature was in her cradle,

> " And last, of kings and queens and heroes old."

The *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* came next, 1629. The introduction is in the modified stanza of Spenser; the rest of the ode is written in a vigorous, but somewhat jolting metre, which the felicity of its management, and the curious felicity of the diction redeem from clumsiness. Its rough strength much ennobles passages where strength of conception is eminent, but it increases the shock we receive from the fantastic conceits of the poem. The argument is very simple. At the Child's birth the world was at peace, and peaceful all nature. In the hush of the universe the shepherds hear the angel song, and heaven bursts into singing, which, were it to last, the golden age were come. But so it cannot be, and in sharp contrast with the sweet music of joy, Milton paints the judgment-day. Not till after that will be our full bliss, but in Christ's birth that coming glory is begun. The old dragon and his brood are shorn of their power; all the pagan gods and oracles mourn and fly away, and the Virgin lays her Babe to rest. Peace begins

and peace ends this splendid song, and between the goals of peace, in finely contrasted music, the sacred beauty of the Christian heaven and the solemn unity of God is set over against the "dismal horror" and polytheism of the pagan worship. Yet he is kind to the Greeks: his love of classic beauty seized him as he wrote the nineteenth and twentieth stanzas; and the touch of mediævalism when the ghosts and the yellow-skirted fays slip away from the morn completes this strange Renaissance mingling of Christianity, classicism, and the middle ages.

The poems on *The Circumcision* and *The Passion* are connected in thought with the *Ode on the Nativity*, and seem to have been attempts of metre and manner at the great subject of the Redemption. They are failures, and it is probable that Milton felt that Giles Fletcher, who with his brother Phineas was the closest imitator of Spenser, had treated the subject in this way as well as it could be done. But the abrupt and powerful rhythm in which he had wrought the Circumcision, and which suits so well for the quick rush and quick closing of condensed thought, pleased his ear, and he used it, much improved, and with great force in the lines *On Time*, and with a glorious splendour in the poem *On a Solemn Music*, the spirit and power of which may be best expressed by saying —using his own line about the seraphim—that Milton there

"His loud uplifted angel trumpet blew."

The Epitaph on Shakspere needs no praise—those on Hobson only prove by their cumbrous witticisms how absent humour was from Milton's mind. He is like his own elephant in them·

"The unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might and wreathed
His lithe proboscis"

The Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester is pathetic and graceful, and though less quick in hitting the point than the Epitaph of Ben Jonson,

from which it is imitated, is more tender and more true. The metre, the seven-syllabled trochaic, the trick of which, as used with wonderful sweetness by Shakspere and the Elizabethans, we seem to have lost, was never, even by Milton himself, more exquisitely used than in this little lyric. As to the *Song on May Morning*, it is less imitative than the rest, and if a little commonplace, is yet natural, and prophesies the newer and happier manner of the *Allegro*.

Departure from Cambridge.—Before Milton left Cambridge, he had to consider what kind of life he would lead, and long before his last year at the university he had given up the idea of entering the Church. A letter written to a friend, and dated by the sonnet written "On his being Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three," which he sends in the letter, and says was composed "some while since," admits us to his thoughts upon his life. His friend had admonished him for his "tardy moving," and that "he had given up himself to dream away his years in the arms of studious retirement." His letter, dwelling on his desire to make use of "the talent"—an image that recurs in a later sonnet, "*and that one talent which 'twas death to hide*—" and God's commandment to use it, and on his desire of immortal fame, says that it may be he does not press forward at once, having "a religious advisement how *best* to undergo—not taking thought of being *late*, so it give advantage to be more *fit*:" and the pith of it all is inclosed in the sonnet, one of the most solemn and beautiful pieces of personal writing in English poetry. The fact was that "perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the Church, and that he who took orders must subscribe slave," and being "Church-outed by the prelates," he turned, and turned with infinite relief and joy, to a literary life, especially to poetry, feeling that his style, "and chiefly in versing, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live." It was a conclusion which at first dismayed his father, but he records in a Latin epistle

of this time, addressed to him, the arguments he used, and their affectionate and grateful tone soon conquered the old man's dislike.

Life at Horton, 1632-38.—On leaving Cambridge, he went to live with his father at Horton

> "Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies;
> But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;"

enthralled him, and he gave himself up to quiet work in quiet leisure. "My footsteps," he says, "shall avoid the eyes of the profane. Be far off, watchful cares, be far off, all quarrels." With his father's consent, then, he stayed at Horton, and "spent there a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers;" learning now and then when he went to London "something new in mathematics and music, in which sciences he delighted." And in this manner he passed five years and nine months, from July, 1632, to April, 1638, that is, till he was thirty years of age.

The place was pretty, a land of pasture, and corn, and wood, and orchard, watered by many streams, and fed by the Colne. Not far off flowed the Thames,
meadows of
"bosomed
enery, and
coloured by it, five poems were made by Milton, the Sonnet to the Nightingale, the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, the *Arcades*, and the *Comus;* and of these the *Comus* written in 1634, is justly thought to be the last. The *Lycidas*, finished in November, 1637, was perhaps composed in London. These six poems represent the poetic activity of six years.

The Sonnet—

> "O nightingale, that on yon blooming spray
> Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,"

strikes the same two notes of bright and pensive

sentiment about nature and man which are worked into full subjects in the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*. It is the sonnet of a Lover and a Poet, and one might conjecture from it that Milton was at this time not quite fancy-free.

> "Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
> Both them I serve, and of their train am I."

The Allegro and Penseroso, the resemblances to which in previous writers, as in Burton, and Beaumont and Fletcher, only prove that Milton had read English literature, and could better what he borrowed if he borrowed it—represent Nature, and Man, and Art as they appear to a man filled with an imaginative joy and an imaginative sadness. The *Allegro*, which begins with the early morning and ends at night, is paralleled thought by thought, scene by scene, with the *Penseroso*, which begins with the late evening and ends towards the noon of the next day. But the *Penseroso* closes with the wish—which, not paralleled in the *Allegro*, makes us know that Milton preferred the pensive to the mirthful temper—That he may live on into old age the contemplative life,

> "Till old experience do attain,
> To something like prophetic strain."

Both poems are ushered in with a stately intro duction, and change to a quicker and lighter measure, of which the scheme appears to be trochaic, though iambics are often introduced and especially in the *Penseroso*. The greatest pains is bestowed upon the rhythm. There is nothing hazarded, nothing careless, yet the poems move, it seems, with careless grace. They are a landmark in the metrical art of poetry, and they are conscious of their art throughout.

The words are arranged and chosen to imitate or suggest the thing described: alliteration is used to heighten the effect, but much more sparingly than

[illegible] earlier men, such as his "original" Spenser[1]

[illegible]

verse frequently pauses in the midst of the lines. It rests, like a pensive man who, walking, stops to think, and its movement is slow, even stately.

Both poems are full of natural description. But it is neither the description which imposes one's own feeling on nature, nor the moralising description of Gray, nor does it even resemble that description which in Shelley and Wordsworth was built on the thought that Nature was alive and man's companion. It is the pure description of things seen, seen not necessarily through the poet's own mood, but always in direct relation to Man and to the special mood of man's mind which Milton has chosen as the groundwork for each poem.

The allusiveness of the poems—and extreme allusiveness is a characteristic mark, and often a fault, of the poetry of Milton—pleases by the claim it makes on study. The extreme simplicity of the two motives—and Milton, however his poems are involved, has always a simple motive—makes these poems simple, and this is one reason why children as well as others understand and have pleasure in them. The picturesqueness of the scenes, the clear-cut and vivid outline of the things described—and this also is a constant excellence of Milton, though he sometimes wilfully spoils it by digression,—is also a source of delight to young and old: while the work of the higher imagination is felt as a shaping power in the poems, as the Orphean music which has harmonized and built them into that unity which is the highest and last demand of Art.

The Arcades.—It may be that the *Arcades* has no right to this place, that the arguments based on

[1] "Milton has acknowledged to me," says Dryden, "that Spenser was his original."

its position in the Cambridge MSS. which put it back to 1631, are true; but it is at least so linked to *Comus* in poetical relationship and in its history that it is best to discuss it here. It is a small portion of a masque given by some noble persons of her family to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield, at evenfall: the masquers coming up the avenue of elms called the Queen's Walk, a memorial of the visit of Elizabeth during which she had heard Burbidge's players first play *Othello*. The subject was worth the muse of Milton. The Countess, now in venerable age, was not only a great figure in English society—a Spencer by birth, married first to Lord Strange, afterwards Lord Derby; married secondly to the Lord-Keeper Egerton afterwards Lord Chancellor to King James, Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley—she was also bound up with the literature of England. Lord Strange, in his time a poet and a patron of the drama, is the Amyntas of Spenser. She herself is the Amaryllis of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*; and of the three sisters whom Spenser had known at Althorpe in Elizabeth's early time, she was his favourite. To Elizabeth, Lady Carey, he dedicated *Muiopotmos*, to Anne, Lady Compton, his *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, but to Alice Spenser, then Lady Strange, he inscribed in 1591, *The Teares of the Muses*, a poem that describes and mourns over the state of literature. When we think then of how much of the great past seemed to meet in her, we are not surprised by Milton's outburst:—

> "Might she the wise Latona be,
> Or the towered Cybele,
> Mother of a hundred gods?
> Juno dares not give her odds."

The poem itself is slight, the introduction not very worthy. The eighty lines of rhymed verse seem to be hampered in thought and movement by the needs of rhyme. One is driven to feel how much better Milton would have made them in the vehicle of blank verse. But they contain one splendid passage on his

favourite subject of the spheral music that the nine Sirens sing:—

> "And the low world in measured motion draw
> After the heavenly tune."

The songs which close it are pretty, but below Milton's power. The whole piece, in fact, bears the stamp of the occasional.

Comus.—The name *Comus* was given to this masque after Milton's death. Its proper description is "A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales." Lord Bridgewater was stepson of the Countess of Derby and son of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, and was married to his stepsister, Lady Frances Stanley. He was made Lord President of Wales and went down, with his powers freshly defined by a Royal Letter, to the castle of Ludlow, his official seat, in 1631. His family accompanied him, and among them his youngest daughter Lady Alice Egerton and her two younger brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton. These three were the Lady, and The Two Brothers in the Masque of *Comus* which was now acted, at the close of the long festivities, on Michaelmas night, 1634, in the great hall of the castle. Lawes,[1] the musician, took the part of the Attendant Spirit. It is not known who acted Comus and Sabrina.

The first scene discovered a wild wood, and Lawes, as the Attendant Spirit, descended, singing a part of the epilogue transposed for the occasion, the words *To the ocean* being altered to "*From the heavens*," and ending with the line, *Where a cherub soft reposes*,

[1] Lawes, son of Thomas Lawes, Vicar Choral of Canterbury
a
Cc
wr
vo
in
Sc
upon, also his faith and worth.

changed from "*Where young Adonis oft reposes,*"
so that it was a song of arrival, not of departure.
Then the speech was made in which the matter of
the masque was laid down and connected with the
special occasion in the lines beginning:—

> "And all this tract that fronts the fallen sun
> A noble peer of mickle trust and power
> Has in his charge."

Comus then enters and his crew; and then the Lady
who is lured away; until her brothers, instructed by
the Spirit in the guise of Thyrsis, and helped of
Sabrina, rush in and rescue her from Comus. The
scene changes then, Ludlow Castle appears, and the
festal games; the country dancers disperse when
Lawes, as the Spirit, presents Lady Alice and her
brothers to the earl; they dance a courtly measure
and the Spirit speaks the epilogue—"But now my
task is smoothly done."

The play was published anonymously by Lawes i
537, Milton consenting with some shy shrinking fro
e venture. It was he who supplied the motto, a
aid with the shepherd in Virgil,

> "Eheu! quid volui misero mihi; floribus Austrum
> Perditus."

It was republished with the first collective editio
his poems in 1645, and again in 1673. Since t
it has become far-famed, and critics have so
for its sources and have found them in Pe
Old Wives' Tale, in Fletcher's *Faithful Shephe*
in Ben Jonson's masque of *Pleasure Reco*
to Virtue, in a Latin extravaganza called C
by Hendrik van der Putten, a Dutchman,
in the *Odyssey;* but it little matters where
and that came from, the poem, as we ha
is Milton's in every line, in thought, in st
build, in imaginative and moral power. It
Milton's rank as a poet among all men capable
ing. Sir Henry Wotton's voice was, we may be s
voice of all men of culture:—"A dainty piece

tainment, wherein I should much commend the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The phrase Doric delicacy is not ill-said; but it is not in the lyrics, which are excelled by many of the Elizabethan lyrics, but in the full-weighted dignity of the blank verse that the poem was then unparalleled. Moreover it was marked by a greater grandeur of style and thought, by a graver beauty, and by a more exercised and self-conscious art than any poem of its character which England had as yet known. It belonged to the Elizabethan spirit, but it went beyond it and made a new departure for English poetry. The way it showed could not be walked in by the men of the Restoration and the Revolution. It was before its time, but that is at once the good and the evil fortune of a great genius.

Johnson's sturdy criticism on it has much force and

target. *Comus* is not a regular drama, but a masque, and a masque obeys laws distinct from those of the regular drama. The masque depends for success not only on the poetry, which here is splendid, but also and chiefly on its occasion, and away from the occasion its dramatic fitness cannot be judged. It depends also on the decoration and music, and these are so knit to the occasion that, even when they are reproduced, they have not the same value as at the time they were first made. No one can judge how far *Comus* contradicts Johnson's judgment of its want of interest as a dramatic representation, unless he can recreate in his mind not only the scene, and the "occasion," and all its interests, but also all the feelings of the spectators, and the thought of the story in their minds to which the masque spoke; and this was work of which Johnson at least seems incapable. *Comus* was writte

ccasion, and only in the atmosphere of the moment an its dramatic merits be judged.

Still that *Comus* soars beyond the occasion is plain enough. It displaced itself as a masque to rise into a poem to the glory and victory of virtue. And its virtue lies in the mastery of the righteous will over sense and appetite. It is a song to Temperance as the ground of freedom, to temperance as the guard of all the virtues, to beauty as secured by temperance, and its central point and climax is in the pleading of these motives by the Lady against their opposites in the mouth of the Lord of sensual Revel.

It is moreover raised above an ethical poem by its imaginative form and power; and its literary worth enables us to consider it, if we choose, apart from its dramatic form. Its imagination, however, sinks at times, and one can scarcely explain this otherwise than by saying that the Elizabethan habit of fantastic metaphor clung to Milton at this time. When he does fall, the fall is made more remarkable by the soaring strength of his loftier flight and by the majesty of the verse. Nothing can be worse in conceptio than the comparison of night to a thief who shuts u for the sake of his felony, the stars whose lamps bu everlasting oil, in his dark lantern. The better is carried out and the finer the verse, the worse it And yet it is instantly followed by the great pass about the fears of night, the fantasies and airy ton that syllable men's names, and by the glor appeal to conscience, faith, and God, followed i turn by the fantastic conceit of the cloud that out its silver lining on the night. This i Elizabethan weakness and strength, the mixt gold and clay, the want of that art-sensitiveness feels the absurd: and Milton, even in *Paradis* when he had got further from his originals, fa it not unfrequently. It is a fault which runs a good deal of his earlier work, it is more *Comus* than elsewhere; but it was the faul poetic age.

October, 1634 — November, 1637. — Three years passed after the making of *Comus* before the making of *Lycidas*. Milton went to and fro between Horton and London, and probably stayed some time at Oxford in 1635, when he was incorporated as Master of Arts of that University. He suffered the loss of his mother in April, 1637; and we find him shortly after the death of Ben Jonson, in the August of that year, writing to Diodati from London. A few phrases in these letters are of interest and illustrate his work. "My genius," he says, "is such that no delay, no rest, no care or thought almost of anything holds me aside until I reach the end, and round off as it were some period of my studies." "What God has resolved concerning me," he says in another letter, "I know not, but this I know at least—He has instilled into me a vehement love of the beautiful. Not with so much labour, as the fables have it, is Ceres said to have sought her daughter Proserpine, as I am wont day and night to seek for this idea of the beautiful through all the forms and faces of things . . . . You ask what I am thinking of? So may the good Deity help me, of immortality—I am pluming my wings and meditating flight." The letter closes with an account of his reading of Greek and Italian History, and his wish to leave a place where he was cramped, and to find a lodging in some Inn of the lawyers where there was a pleasant and shady walk.

Lycidas.—What he meditated at this time and [illegible]

[illegible]

doubt that when he began it he wrote it with the close intensity of which he speaks above. It was finished in November, 1637. It could scarcely have been begun till the end of September, for there is no mention either of its subject or itself in his letters to Diodati, the last of which is dated September 23. Edward King, its subject, was a college friend of Milton's, a favourite of fortune and of all who knew him. Sailing

from Chester to Dublin to visit his people, the ship struck on a rock in a calm sea, and he was drowned. His friends at Cambridge proposed a volume of memorial verses in Greek, Latin, and English. It saw the light in 1638, and Milton's *Lycidas* is the last poem in the book.

It is a pastoral, and in the form of other pastorals; with its introduction and its epilogue, and between them the monody of the shepherd who has lost his friend. Under the guise of one shepherd mourning another, all Milton's relations with Edward King are expressed, and all his thoughts about his character and genius; and the poem, to be justly judged, must be read with the conditions of the pastoral as a form of verse present to the mind. That is enough to dispose of Johnson's unfavourable criticism, which quarrels with the poem for its want of passion and want of nature, and for its improbability. It is not a poem of passionate sorrow, but of admiration and regret expressed with careful art and in a special artistic form; and the classical allusions and shepherd images and the rest are the necessary drapery of the pastoral, the art of which, and the due keeping to form in which, are as important to Milton, and perhaps more so, than his regret. We are made aware of this when we find Milton twice checking himself in the conduct of the poem for having gone beyond the limits of the pastoral.

The metrical structure, which is partly borrowed from Italian models, is as carefully wrought as the rest, and harmonized to the thoughts. "Milton's ear was a good second to his imagination." *Lycidas* appeals not only to the imagination, but to the educated imagination. There is no ebb and flow of poetical power as in *Comus;* it is an advance on all his previous work, and it fitly closes the poetic labour of his youth. It is needless to analyse it, and all criticism is weaker than the poem itself. Yet we may say that one of its strange charms is its solemn undertone rising like a religious chaunt through the elegiac

musick, the sense of a stern national crisis in the midst of its pastoral mourning; the sense of Milton's grave force of character among the flowers and fancies of the poem; the sense of the Christian religion pervading the classical imagery. We might say that these things are ill-fitted to each other. So they would be, were not the art so fine and the poetry so over-mastering; were they not fused together by genius into a whole so that the unfitness itself becomes fascination.

Political and Social Aspects of these Poems.—Puritanism, when Milton began to write, was not universally apart from literature and the fine arts. In its staid and pure religion Milton's work had its foundation, but the temple he had begun to build upon it was quarried from the ancient and modern arts and letters of Greece and Italy and England. And filling the temple rose the peculiar incense of the Renaissance. The breath of that spirit is felt in the classicalism of the *Ode to the Nativity*, in the love proclaimed for Shakespeare, in the graceful fancy of the *Epitaph to Lady Winchester*, and in the gaiety of [illegible] ther [illegible] the [illegible] eep, personal, passionate religion of the Puritan, possessing, and possessed by, God Over against the Renaissance musick is set the high and devout strain of the first sonnet and of the *Odes to Time* and *A Solemn Musick*. Even while at Cambridge, the double being in Milton makes itself felt, the struggle between the two spirits of the time is reflected in his work. These contrasted spirits in him became defined as the political and social war deepened around his life. The second sonnet still is gay, fresh with the morn of love, [illegible]

yet, in these two poems more than in the Cambridge

ns, the deepening of the struggle is felt. Milton
ns to presage in them that the time would come
n the gaiety of England would cease to be shared
by serious men; when the mirth of the cavalie
uld shut out the pleasures derived from loft
elancholy, because they shut out the devil; as th
uritan pensiveness would be driven to shut out th
leasures of Mirth, because they shut out God. Wh
e gives full weight in the *Allegro* to "unreprov
leasures free," he makes it plain in the *Penser*
hat he prefers the sage and holy pleasures of thou
ul sadness. These best befitted the solemn aspect of
the time. A few years later and the presage had come
true. Milton is driven away from even the *Allegro*
point of view. In *Comus* the wild licence of the
court society is set over against the grave and tem-
perate virtue of a Puritan life. The unchastity, the
glozing lies, the glistering apparel that hid moral
deformity, the sloth and drunkenness, the light fan-
tastic round[1] of the enchanter's character and court,
are (it seems likely) Milton's allegory of the Court
society of his time. The stately philosophy of the
Brothers which had its root in subduing passion and its
top in the love of God; the virginal chastity of the
Lady, and at the end the releasing power of Sabrina's
purity, exalt and fill up more sternly the idea of the
Penseroso and symbolise that noble Puritanism which
loved learning and beauty only when they were pure
but holiness far more than either. It may be, as Mr
Browne supports, that there is a second allegory withi
the first, of Laud and his party as the Sorcerer com
mending the cup of Rome by wile and threat to t
lips of the Church and enforcing it by fine and i
prisonment; paralysing in stony fetters the Lady
the Church. It may be that Milton called in this po
on the few who, having resisted like the Broth
but failed to set the Church free, ought now to em
a new force, the force of Purity; but this aspe

[1] Mr. Browne has well drawn notice to the echo c
Allegro in the songs of *Comus*.

the struggle is at least not so clear in *Comus* as in *Lycidas*. In *Lycidas* Milton has thrown away the last shreds of Church and State and is Presbyterian. The strife now at hand starts into prominence, and not to the bettering of the poem as a piece of art. It is brought in—and the fault is one which frequently startles us in Milton—without any regard to the unity of feeling in the poem. The passage on the hireling Church looks like an after-thought, and Milton draws attention to it in the argument. "The author . . . by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy then in their height." But he does not leave Laud and his policy nor the old Church tenderly. When he felt strongly, he wrote fiercely. The passage is a splendid and a fierce cry of wrath, and the rough trumpet note, warlike and unsparing, which it sounds against the unfaithful herdsmen who are sped and the "grim wolf with privy paw," was to ring louder and louder through the prose works, and finally to clash in the ears of those very Presbyterians whom he now supported. There is then a steady progress of thought and of change in the poems. The Milton of *Lycidas* is not the Milton of *Comus*. The Milton of C[illegible] [illegible]
T[illegible]
C[illegible]
left now but its learning and its art.

Continental Journey, 1638-39.—Milton left London in 1638, ten years before the Peace of Westphalia, in the last decade of the Thirty Years War. Passing through Paris in May, he saw Grotius, "the first of living Dutchmen," who took his visit kindly. Letters from Lord Scudamore, the ambassador, carried him through France; and passing through Genoa, Leghorn [illegible]
where he [illegible]
he says, [illegible]
and learned men whose private academies[1] also (which are an institution there of most praiseworthy effect

[1] Clubs of *dilettanti*.

both for the cultivation of polite letters and the keeping up of friendships) I assiduously attended. The memory of you, Jacobo Gaddi, of you, Carlo Dati, Frescobaldi, Coltellini, Bonmattei, Chimentelli, Francini, and of many others, always delightful and pleasant as it is to me, time shall never destroy." He had a happy time, interchanging literary work with his new friends, and awakening their wonder at his powers. An ode and a letter written in his praise by Francini and Dati, testify not only to their admiration of his culture but of his lofty morality. Nor was this praise earned by any reticence on his religious views. "With singular politeness," he says, "they conceded me full liberty of speech on this delicate subject," a liberty, he allows us to understand in the *Areopagitica*, of which they themselves regretted their want. The well-known lines in the *Paradise Lost* suggest to us that he visited Vallombrosa, and we know that he saw Galileo at Arcetri, and may have looked at the moon with him as he pictures the Tuscan artist doing

> "At evening, from the top of Fesole,
> Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
> Rivers and mountains, in her spotty globe."

Florence drove its enchantment into his heart; "I eagerly go," he writes, "for a feast to that Dante of yours, and to Petrarca, and a good few more, nor has Athens itself with its pellucid Ilissus, nor old Rome with its banks of Tiber, been able to hold me, but that I love to visit your Arno and these hills of Fæsule." This was written on September 10, and we find him next at Rome, "where the antiquity and ancient renown of the city detained him nearly three months." At Rome, as at Florence, cultivated society was organised into academies, and Milton was received gladly into their circle. Lucas Holstenius, the German librarian of the Vatican, took care to mention him to the Barberini, and at the cardinal's palace he may have first heard Leonora Baroni, the greatest singer of the time. Three Latin epigrams addressed to her

record his delight with her voice. As at Florence, so here, men wrote verses in his praise, and to one of them, Salsillus, Milton sent a Latin poem in which he speaks of his own land where the worst of all the winds blows, and of the beauty of the oaks of Faunus, of the grove of Egeria and the swollen Tiber—names which seem to prove that he had wandered over the Campagna. Thence he went to Naples, where he spent two months. Manso received him, the friend of Tasso and Marini, in whose house the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* had been finished;

> "Fra cavalier magnanimi e cortesi
> Risplende il Manso"

"This nobleman honoured the author, during his stay in Naples, with every kindness in his power, and conferred on him many acts of courtesy. To him, therefore, his guest, to show himself not ungrateful, sent the following piece of verse." This was the epistle to Manso, in Latin hexameters, afterwards published in 1645. One passage in it is of importance, in which he prays that he may have such a friend, "if perchance I shall ever call back into verse our native Kings, and Arthur stirring wars even under the earth that hides him, or speak of the great-souled heroes, the Knights of the unconquered Table." Already he was meditating an epic, and this was its subject. He recurs to his early love of it in his later days (*Par Lost*, I. 580.)

But while he lived this rich and social life, Scotland had openly rebelled, and the discontents in England rather increased than lessened The fame of these things reached him as he was thinking of journeying to Sicily and [illegible]
"The sad n[illegible]
called me ba[illegible]
fellow-countr[illegible]
should be travelling abroad for pleasure." So he started for home, lingering four months more at Rome and Florence; seeing Lucca, and tr[illegible] to Venice through Bologna and Ferrara Through

the whole time, though warned of danger lying in wait for him at Rome, he spoke boldly of his religious opinions, but without obtrusiveness. "I had made this resolution, not of my own accord to introduce conversation about religion, but if asked respecting the faith, then whatsoever I should suffer, to dissemble nothing." And at Rome whenever it was attacked, he defended his religion most freely. With this tour are connected his five Italian sonnets and one canzone, written as I think Masson renders probable—the first as compliment to some Bolognese lady, the rest to some foreign lady with whom he fell much in love: they bear the stamp of a real, but a passing passion. After a month at Venice, whence he shipped the books and music he had collected, he came home swiftly, lingering only a week at Geneva, where he was daily in the society of John Diodati, the Professor of Theology, and the uncle of his friend Charles who had but lately died. We know the exact date of his sojourn at Geneva, for being asked by the Cerdogni family to write something in their album, he wrote the last lines of *Comus*—

> "If Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her."
>
> "Cælum, non animum, muto, dum trans mare curro."
> Junii 10, 1639, Joannes Miltonus, Anglus.

Early in August we find him in England, and this is his own witness to the life he lived abroad.

"I again take God to witness that in all those places where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually before me, that though I might escape the eyes of men, I certainly could not the eyes of God." [1]

Return to England.—The King's war with the Scots, commonly called the first Bishop's war, was just over in July, 1639, when Milton returned to England, and though public affairs were full of interest, his

[1] *Def. Secunda.*

private grief for the death of his oldest and best loved friend, Charles Diodati, weighed most heavily on his heart It was not long before he "deplored himself and his solitary condition," in his Latin elegy on the death of Damon. It is written in hexameters, and is an absolute pastoral, deliberately and minutely worked after the manner of the Sicilian poets, the nymphs of whose river, Himera, he invokes at the beginning to "tell this later Sicilian story." Masson's translation of it is admirably done, and he justly claims to have been the first to bring out its biographical interest. In spite of the conventional form, the strong and almost impassioned grief of Milton for his friend fills the whole poem. What faithful companion, he asks,

> "Now will cling to my side in place of the one so familiar,
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Who will bring me again thy blandishing ways and thy laughter,
> All thy Athenian jests, and all the fine wit of thy fancies?
>
> * * * * * *
>
> [illegible]

But the deeper interest of the poem lies in its revelation of Milton's sustained purpose to write a heroic poem. We have seen that he was projecting in Italy, [illegible]

In this elegy he seems to have decided on the theme and to have begun it. I quote Masson's translation—

> "I too—for strangely my pipe for some time past had been sounding
> Strains of an unknown strength—
>
> * * * *

[1] Masson's translation, *Milton's Life*, vol ii. p. 85 Those who wish to read a translation of the Elegies had better look for them in Cowper's poems. They are not accurate translations, but they are those of a poet.

ave a theme of the Trojans cruising our southern headland:
aping to song, and the realm of Imogen, daughter c
Pandras,
ennus and Arvirach, dukes, and Bren's bold brothe
Belinus,
hen the Armorican settlers under the laws of the Britons,
y, and the womb of Igraine fatally pregnant with Arthur,
ther's son."

en he looks forward to hanging aside, forgotter
Latin pipe, and exchanging it for an Englis
e, content—

If but yellow-haired Ouse shall read me, the drinker of Ala
Humber which whirls as it flows, and Trent's whole valley
orchards.
Thames, my own Thames, above all, and Tamar's western
waters
Tawny with ores, and where the white waves swinge the far
Orkneys."

Fame urged him and love of England. The great work of his genius was to be written in the tongue that his countrymen could read.

The first sketch of Paradise Lost began the fulfilment of this desire. It was made in London, where he now took a lodging in St. Bride's Churchyard, and found work to do in the education of his two nephews, Mrs. Agar's sons by her first marriage. Here, during the winter of 1639–40, we have proof, from his jottings in a MS. now at Cambridge, of the manner in which he employed himself. He was searching for a subject for a great poem. He seems soon to have given up the British theme, and to have tended towards a Scriptural one. He filled the seven pages of the MS. in question with subjects and detailed sketches of the form of subjects, sixty-one of which are Scriptural and thirty-eight from British history. Most of them, when they are at all expanded, are in the dramatic form; but the epic and the pastoral are now and then suggested. The most remarkable thing in the list is that in the years 1640—42, more than twenty years before the work was done, the subject of *Paradise Lost* was

conceived. There are four drafts for it, three of them standing together as the first in the list, the fourth jotted down some time afterwards. They are all in the dramatic form, and we know from Aubrey and Philips that the invocation of Satan to the Sun, in the *Paradise Lost*, book iv. 32-41, was written about 1642, and intended as the beginning of the drama. In the quiet of his lodging, these were his purposes, and, were it not that his country and the great cause of liberty called him forth, we might regret that so much was lost to literature, that now for twenty years the magnificent voice of Milton's song was hushed. It may be that *Paradise Lost* was grander from the long experience of a great political crisis, but the lighter and more youthful touch and

himself never wholly to surrender them, as long as he lived. While the times of chiding lasted he would cherish them, and when the noises ceased, fulfil them; but not now. There was other work more needful; and in 1641, in his *Reason of Church Government*, he told the world of his thoughts of a great English poem, of his present necessity to give up the doing of it, and of his resolve to do it, in words full of a noble pathos.

"Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapour of wine . . . nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to the Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and all knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs."

CHAPTER II.

THE PROSE WORKS.

was a longer time than he thought before Milton
uld soar again, with his singing robes about him.
ready the Long Parliament was sitting when he
oved from St. Bride's Churchyard to Aldersgate
reet, and the strenuous work of that Parliament,
ne measures it took for discipline in the Church,
neasures which in Milton's mind prophesied a reform
n the manners and institutions of the Common-
wealth, roused him to political action in behalf of his
country. "I resolved," he says (*Defensio Secunda*),
"though I was then meditating other matters, to
transfer into this struggle all my genius and all the
strength of my industry." The Prose Works are
dedicated to Liberty, and Milton in his *Defensio
Secunda* divides them for us. He believed there were
three species of liberty essential to the happiness of
social life,—religious, domestic, and civil liberty.
The five pamphlets we shall presently describe con-
cerned the first. Under the head of domestic liberty he
ranks three questions—the conditions of the conjugal
tie, and to this belong his four tracts on divorce; the
education of youth, discussed in the short treatise
to Samuel Hartlib; the free publication of thoughts,
and this is treated in the *Areopagitica*. We may our-
selves rank the two Defences of the People of Englanc
and the *Eikonoclastes* and the other treatises of tha
time as belonging to the discussion of civil liberty
while the pamphlets after Cromwell's death equally c
out for and defend religious and civil liberty. Lastl
the treatise on Christian Doctrine is in fact one lo
demand for liberty of theological thought.

It was a warfare then in which Milton engaged, a
he fought the battle with all his intellectual and m

power. And he fought always in the van, until, as the literary champion of the Commonwealth, his name became known, side by side with Cromwell's, over Europe. In the course of the warfare he passed from Presbyterianism to Independency. In it he linked himself closely to Cromwell, but not so blindly as not to first warn him against becoming faithless to liberty, and afterwards to look back with dispraise upon a Government which had at least tended to a tyranny. There was no one else in England to do this work for liberty, and Milton felt himself forced into it; and if *it was not always done in a manner we should wish*, we ought to remember that Milton was out of his true province in it, and that the sacrifice he made of his Poetry may have tended to embitter his Prose.

The Pamphlets on Episcopacy and Church Reform introduce Milton's prose works and his life for twenty years. *The first pamphlet* was entitled, *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it*, 1641. It grew up out of the war of pamphlets that arose on the presentation of the petition against Episcopacy, and out of the debates on Church Reform in the Parliament. Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance* against the Petition was met by an answer, written by *Smectymnuus*, the title formed by the initials of the writers, Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurston. Archbishop Usher then took up the ball on the side of a modified episcopacy, and the contest, thus carried on without, was supported within the Houses by the High Church Party who wished to retain episcopacy as it was; by the Root and Branch Party who wished to destroy it; and by the Reforming Party who wished to purify it from all its evils. The course of the contest was interrupted by the trial and execution of Strafford, and it was shortly after his death, probably in the beginning of June, that Milton's pamphlet appeared, taking, with sarcastic fierceness, the side of the Root and Branch party. It inquires why the

Reformation was arrested in England? It was arrested, he answers, by three sets of persons, the Antiquitarians, who defend prelacy because it is ancient and sacred; the Libertines, who defend it because it least troubles their licence; the Politicians, who, unworthy of the name, defend it for its consistency with monarchy. All that has ever been spoilt of political and religious reform has been spoilt, he says, because "The Bishop's foot has been in it," and he ends with a magnificent outburst of poetic prayer that the Omnipotent King may deliver England from the wild boars that have broken into His vineyard.

The second pamphlet, in answer to Usher's, and entitled, *On Prelatical Episcopacy*, appeared almost immediately after the first, and through twenty-four pages Milton mocked in it the Antiquitarian view of episcopacy. *The third pamphlet* instantly followed. It replied to Bishop Hall's *Defence of his Humble Remonstrance*, and its title tells the tale of its contents —*Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnuus*, 1641. It comments step by step on Hall's work, and is both tiresome, and as coarse as Swift in his coarse mood; nor is the coarseness redeemed by Swift's incisiveness. A few passages of great nobility succour the weary reader, but only make him the more regret that Milton should have fallen into so much brutality. It was not till after the Grand Remonstrance in November and December, 1641, and the attempt to arrest the Five Members in the following January, and perhaps after the Bill for excluding Bishops from Parliament had passed in February, that Milton again appeared in th[illegible] lists. *The fourth pamphlet* was published unde[illegible] name, the three previous ones being anony[illegible] was called, *The Reason of Church-governm[illegible] against Prelaty*. Having argued on the or[illegible] nature of true Church-government, and that[illegible] does not contain or perform it, he proceed[illegible] second book to show that Prelaty opposeth th[illegible] and end of the Gospel—in its outward form o[illegible]

pomp—in its ceremonies which deform the truth—in its jurisdiction which connects a spiritual body with the state. The treatise then ends with a chapter on the mischief that Prelaty does in the state. Our first interest in the pamphlet is, that it proves that Milton [illegible]

contains a sketch, parts of which have been quoted, of his life, and his work, and his aims, and his reasons for leaving poetry for prose, reasons which all who care for liberty in religion and in political life sympathise with and honour. "For me, I have determined to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it to me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the Church's good." It was for this high end that he left his literary calm to use a manner of writing in which he had "but the use of his left hand," and embarked "in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes." It seemed to his indignant heart that the writing of poetry was impossible until the land "had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of Prelaty under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit could flourish."

The fifth pamphlet was called forth by Bishop Hall's [illegible] "The Bishop [illegible] to have [illegible] and to have been vomited out from the university into a suburb sink in London. "Where his morning haunts are, I wist not, but he who would find him after dinner must search the playhouses and the bordelloes, for there I have traced him." Milton's reply was entitled—*An Apology against a Pamphlet called A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions of the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus*, 1642. It was [illegible]

of a man burdened with an uncongenial wife, expressions which his wife would naturally take to herself, and which Milton drew, it seems, from his own experience. Dwelling on this view, he came to think it not only applicable to his own case, but to the man's slavery in an unfit marriage over the whole world: and he resolved to make it a part of his struggle for freedom, to set men at liberty from the tyranny of an indissoluble marriage bond. He may have been spurred to this by his wife's refusal to return at Michaelmas; at any rate, on February 2nd, 1644, in answer to the abuse and criticism that fell on him from all sides, he put forth a second edition, much enlarged, of his Tract, signed with his name, and headed by a bold address to the Parliament. It is a fresh instance of the daring of Milton; no man had ever more the courage of his opinions. The re-edited tract filled men's minds, and he was soon placed as a "Divorcer" among the tribes of sectaries which the restrictions of the Presbyterian party, speaking from the Westminster Assembly and the Parliament, had multiplied and remultiplied in England. Opposition only inflamed Milton, and in July appeared his second Divorce Tract, entitled the *Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce*, in which he deliberately challenged the Assembly; followed on March 4th, 1645, by two more, the *Tetrachordon*, or expositions upon the four chief places in Scripture which treat of marriage, and *Colasterion*, a punishing reply to his assailants. Two sonnets, in which he mocked his adversaries, closed the controversy.

The Education Tract.—While the divorce pamphlets were being written Milton engaged in two other subjects pertaining to liberty,—Education, and the liberty of expressing Thoughts. He was living quietly in his garden-house, and he took pupils and tried on them his system of education; and out of this experience, and out of long talks with a new friend, Samuel Hartlib, a German who was pushing Comenius' method of teaching in London, grew his

little tract on Education. (June, 1644.) It is well worth reading; it is short, clear, and eloquent. A whole scheme for a complete and generous education—"that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war," is drawn forth. It attacks the methods of the Universities, and lays down its own method. Not only studies and arts are prescribed, but knowledge of agriculture, of warlike and physical science and medicine, of theology and poetry; and, in the latter, "of what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe"—of martial exercises, and of music. Journeys also are insisted on, that the youths may gain practical knowledge of their own land and of foreign states, and learn to enjoy the beauty of the world. These things rightly taught in academies built for the purpose over England "might in a short time gain them to an incredible diligence and courage, infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardour as could not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men." It is plain, however, that the system would do for none but youths of leisure and fortune, and is directed towards [illegible]

the necessity of the mere mob of men being governed by the best.

The Areopagitica.—In the midst also of the divorce controversy, and arising out of it, another struggle for liberty engaged Milton, the liberty of unlicensed printing. Printing in England had long been subjected to the censorship of delegates appointed by the state. All publications had to be licensed. Of late the censorship had fallen into desuetude, and only thirty-five publications were [illegible] In June a strict [illegible] 333 publications [illegible] f the same year. The press was brought under the strict control of a

et of Presbyterian censors. Milton had despised the ordinance and published his first Divorce Tract and the second edition of it without a licence. When the second tract appeared (it was licensed) in July 1644, the Assembly answered its challenge by denouncing it to Parliament. Mr. Herbert Palmer preached against it in St. Margaret's Westminster, as a book fit to be burned, and the Stationers' Company, jealous for their book trade, which the unregistered publications interfered with, petitioned Parliament against them, and seizing the opportunity, instanced Milton's first tract as one of those blasphemous and evil productions which the slackness of the law allowed to get loose. A committee on printing was appointed, and Milton's pamphlet was mentioned as one whose author was to be inquired for. The matter was not carried out, but Milton's mind was turned to the whole subject, and, "On the subject of the liberation of the press, so that the judgment of the true and the false, what should be published and what suppressed, should not be in the hands of a few men, and these mostly unlearned and of common capacity, erected into a censorship over books—an agency through which no one almost can or will send into the light anything that is above the vulgar taste—on this subject, in the form of an express oration, I wrote my *Areopagitica*." It was published November 24, 1644, unlicensed and unregistered; being an address to Parliament for liberty to publish without license or registering—a prayer to Parliament to repeal their law. The stationers accused him for it before the Lords, but the matter was dropped and the company baulked of its vengeance.

Milton's Censorship.—This is the best place to notice the strange fact that during the whole of the year 1651 Milton acted as Censor of the Press. Masson thinks that this censorship was not much more than a supervision of the Commonwealth weekly paper—*The Mercurius Politicus*. But it seems to have been more; for he was examined on the question of having licensed the *Racovian C*

chism, a Socinian work which was condemned by the Parliament, and is said to have replied that he saw no reason why the book should not be printed. It would appear then that he exercised his censorship in a tolerant manner, but that does not alter the strangeness of the fact that he exercised it at all. Nor is his friendship for Marchamont Needham or his association with him much to his credit. Needham began by editing the *Mercurius Britannicus* on the popular side and then the *Mercurius Pragmaticus* for the royalists, and then again turned his coat and edited the *Mercurius Politicus* for the Commonwealth. It was this man who became "a great crony" of Milton's, and to him and Needham, I presume for these "press" services, Bradshaw left ten pounds a piece in his will. It is not an association by which Milton is honoured, and his being a censor at all of the press does not seem quite worthy of the writer of the *Areopagitica*.

All who care for English literature have read the *Areopagitica*. It is the most literary of Milton's pamphlets, eloquent, to the point, and full of noble [illegible] ...ed to their place, [illegible] ...dom of books will [illegible] readers of books. [illegible] ...ng is only excelled by its uplifted praise of true writing. It calls on the Parliament to defend books. "As good almost kill a man as kill a good book." The censorship which killed so many was a Papal invention that had come into England; and it was an evil invention. The scholar should have liberty to read all books, bad and good, for his virtue should not be "fugitive and cloistered," but disciplined by the trial of good and evil reading. Nor did "licensing" attain its end; it did not stop bad books, and even if that end were right —who is to find intelligent and just licensers? The miseries of the true author at the hands of licensers are then described, and we find that Milton's voice was the voice of a large party. Nevertheless he does

not tolerate "Popery and open superstition, or evil against faith and manners." He adds saving clauses to his principle. But the whole force of the treatise is on the side of liberty, and it ends with a fine series of passages in which he claims liberty of conscience and of the expression of opinion for all the various sects and schisms, whose varieties prove, not the danger and overthrow, but the strength, and zeal, and life of the religious intelligence of England.

Milton wholly ceases to be Presbyterian.—"It cannot be guessed," he says in the *Areopagitica*, "what is intended by some but a second tyranny over learning, and will soon put it out of controversy that Bishops and Presbyters are the same to us both name and thing." That is almost the same phrase as the last line of the sonnet *On the Forcers of Conscience*—

"New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

This sonnet, written early in 1646, embodies Milton's position and the results of the *Areopagitica*, a little more than a year after its publication. He was now not only an Independent, but one of Cromwell's type, who knew no "minister" beyond himself; and not only an Independent, but a sectary, "a divorcer." The Presbyterians could not let him alone, and the *Areopagitica* only sharpened their venom. A Mr Baillie, in his *Dissuasive*, Edwards in his *Gangræna* books that were catalogues of the sects and thei evils, attacked him by name. Milton, who neve spared his adversaries, and met them with tenfold the own fury, wrote his sonnet, and wrought into it close and fiercely all his wrath. The Presbyterians had s up "a classic hierarchy"—the system of Presbyteri classes to force men's consciences—They had added their livings—"seized the widowed whore Plurality" "A. S." Dr. Adam Stuart, and Rutherford, men w had written for strict Presbytery against the Indep dents, are bound up in the same scorn as "shal Edwards and Scotch what d'ye call" (Baillie), and

line "Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears," was in the first draught, "Crop ye as close as marginal P(rynne's) ears." It was not wise to meddle with Milton, and his sonnet (con coda, with a scorpion tail of six verses) sets him on the side of the New Model in the army, against the Scots, and against the Assembly.

Milton's Home Life, early in 1645, had meantime changed. To carry out his divorce views, his wife now being away nearly two years, he thought of marrying again. He had had the society of women during her absence. It was his chief diversion in the winter of 1643, 44, to visit the Lady Margaret Ley, daughter of that Earl of Marlborough who was Lord High Treasurer in the reign of James I.; and his sonnet to her records his admiration. She was much older than Milton, and married. but a lady younger and unmarried engaged at the same time his thoughts, and to her he wrote the sonnet entitled, ***To a Virtuous Young Lady***. It is conjectured that she was the very Miss Davis whom he now, in 1645, had a design of marrying. The news came to Oxford, where the Powell family were in great trouble, and where the King's cause was decaying. Everything urged the Powells to bring about a reconciliation with one who could help them seriously in the crisis. An interview was managed in a friend's house, Milton's wife suddenly appeared, fell on her knees, and

> "Her lowly plight
> Immovable till peace obtained from fault
> Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
> Commiseration."

A few weeks after, for Milton was changing his house from Aldersgate to Barbican, his wife took up her life again with him

Publication of Poems.—It was now, in a moment of quiet, that Milton prepared and published the first collected edition of his poems, January 2, 1646. Humphrey Moseley, an enterprising publisher, who, almost alone among his brethren, devoted himself

to putting forth books of general culture, was his publisher. The English Poems came first, then the Sonnets, English and Italian, then the *Arcades, Lycidas*, and *Comus*—and after a break in the paging, the Latin Poems—the *Elegiarum Liber*, and the *Sylvarum Liber*. Moseley, whose name we ought to remember as one who when the age was overwhelmed with theological and political pamphlets loved good literature and set it forth, himself asked Milton for the MSS.; and in his preface wrote with honest pride of his work, "Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the light as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous Spenser wrote, whose poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled." It is pleasant to hear this silver note of the love of pure literature among the braying of the controversial trumpets, as pleasant as it must have been for many to read, in quiet leisure, poems that seemed to come out of a world above the smoke and stir of this dim spot, out of the region where wars and chiding were at rest. And Milton himself in the motto placed before the volume seems to wish to recall to men's minds by his book that his true place was not among these noises, but among the laurelled choir. He begs, with Thyrsis, that his brow may be girt with the nard of the field lest an ill tongue may hurt the poet yet to be,

> "Baccare frontem
> Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro."

Literary Work.—Within a few weeks after this publication, as if it had stimulated his poetical vein, he wrote the two Divorce sonnets—*On the Detraction which followed on my writing certain Treatises*—and the sonnet on Henry Lawes, whom he now, at his house in Barbican, saw frequently. Then came the anti-Presbyterian sonnet of which I have spoken already; and Milton, having discharged his thunder, sat down to his work with his pupils. The Powells came up from Oxford to stay with him, and in the

midst of the crowded house his first child was born, Anne, on the 29th July, 1646; "a brave girl, though she grew up more and more decrepit." Shortly afterwards Mr. Powell and Milton's father died, and one other friend, Mrs. Catherine Thompson, to whose memory he wrote the Fourteenth Sonnet. The Latin Ode to John Rous, on the loss of a copy of the poems, shows that Milton could still play a little; and a letter to Carlo Dati, in answer to one from this Florentine friend, speaks of his loneliness among uncongenial persons, and recalls the earlier days when he was happier, and his brighter life in Italy. This letter was written in the spring of 1647, when Milton, now left by the Powell family, and at first much engaged in education, suddenly broke off all tutoring, left his house in Barbican, and removed to High Holborn. This change was made in the interval of [illegible]

heart a republican, and already prepared to defend that cause, he was employed on peaceful schemes of literature, on collecting materials for a *Latin Dictionary*, on a *Complete History of England*, and on a *Methodical Digest of Christian Doctrine* So vigorous was his intellect that in the very midst of a tremendous political crisis, of fierce controversy, and of renewed attacks on himself by the Presbyterian Church-government under which religious London was now enslaved, he projected, and was carrying out the work of three men What he did in the way of poetry was to translate nine of the Psalms, lxxx.—lxxxviii. into metre, and badly done they were

The Second Civil War.—Then began the second civil war, and Moab, and Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, whose overthrow he had sung in the eighty-third Psalm, were scattered at Preston and Colchester, and he celebrated his joy at the beginning of September, 1

Lord General Fairfax at the Siege of Colchester; and prophesied in it that a nobler task yet awaited his hand; the freedom of truth and right from violence, and of public faith from fraud. His hope grew greater with every step towards a republic, and when the treaty between Charles and the Parliament was broken up, and the king arraigned, sentenced and executed, January 30, 1649, he threw himself heart and soul into the work of defending the acts of the Commonwealth. A new period of his life now begins, and a new class of works. We have but to mention that in October, 1648, his second daughter, Mary, was born at the house in Holborn.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMONWEALTH AND MILTON'S SECRETARYSHIP.

Milton's first Political Pamphlet.—A month after the death of the King monarchy was formally put aside, and in two months more the Commonwealth was proclaimed. Meanwhile, Milton published on the 13th of February his pamphlet on "*The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*; proving, That it is lawfull, and hath been held so, through all ages, for any, who have the power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked King, and after due conviction, to depose and put him to death, if the ordinary Magistrates have neglected or deny'd to do it." His republican ardour was so great that he was employed on this tract during the trial of the King; and it entered into the lists of the great controversy about Charles's death, just a fortnight after his execution, and four days after the *Eikon Basilike* had appeared. The argument of Milton's work is based on the principle that all men are naturally born free. They bind themselves together in communities. They, because they freely choose a king, may freely depose him much more may they depose and slay a tyrant wh

reigns only for himself and his faction, and this is the duty of the magistrates. Charles was such a tyrant, and the irregular acts of the army are defended, because the magistrates had neglected their duty.

Milton as Latin Secretary.—The work was not commanded, but done out of his own desire; and it was so happily timed that it brought him state employment. "No one ever saw me going about, no one ever saw me asking anything of my friends, or stationed at the doors of the court with a petitioner's face—I kept myself almost entirely at home, managing on my own resources to lead my frugal life. I turned myself to the task of drawing out the history of my country—when lo! the Council of State, invites me, dreaming of nothing of the sort, to a post in connexion with it, with a view to the use of my services, chiefly in foreign affairs." It is thus [illegible]

Magistrates, when he was forty-one years of age, and his salary was 288*l.* 13*s.* 6½*d.* a year. He continued in this office, even after his blindness, to the end of the Commonwealth. With the real government or politics of the country he seems to have had nothing to do, nor does his advice ever seem to have been asked. The letters he wrote to foreign governments were written under instructions, and the style and wording were alone left to him. In fact he was nothing more, politically, than the literary clerk of the Foreign Office. But beyond this, and quite distinct from it, and the real reason of his appointment, he was used by the government as its pamphleteer. He was the first of those literary partizans who, a hundred years later, came to be so frequently employed by our governments. In his case, however, the work he had to do was done, not for pay or for self in any form, but through love of the cause of the Commonwealth, and with an ard[illegible] too frequently degenerated into ferocity

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he coarseness, the odious personalities, were characteristic of the controversial writings of the day, and Milton, unworthy of his own dignity, but with great intellectual force, is more ferocious, more coarse, more personal, and descends to more brutal detail than any of his fellows and opponents. Leaving aside this fault, the work he had to do was done as no other man in England could have done it, and perhaps, had it not been so fierce, it had not told as it did on England and on Europe.

The second political pamphlet, this time don to order, was the *Observations upon the Articles of Pea with the Irish Rebels, on the letter of Ormond to Colonel Jones, and the Representation of the Presbytery at Belfast.* It was published in May, 1649, when Ormond was trying to bring the Irish, the English settlers, and the Scotch Presbyterians all together to the cause of Charles II.

The Eikonoclastes, the third of these, was sent forth from his new lodgings near Charing-Cross on October 6, 1649. The *Eikon Basilike*, to which it was an answer, purported to be written by Charles I. himself in his last years. It was a book of prayers and meditations, and entitled *A Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings.* Accepted as the King's, it is generally believed to have been written by Dr. Gauden, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. It echoed and doubled the cry of horror which arose after the King's execution in England and Europe; and its popularity was such that within th year fifty editions of it appeared in various language Milton's answer met the book chapter by chapte and his anti-royalism is stronger in the *Eikonoclas* than in the *Tenure of Kings.* It convinced no of the opposite side, but it strengthened the ha of those who agreed with it. A second edition of much enlarged, was set forth in 1650.

The Defensio pro Populo Anglicano, fourth political pamphlet, made more noise; in it sent his name over the whole of educated Eu

There was no scholar so famous on the Continent as Claude de Saumaise—Salmasius—the Leyden professor, and Charles II. being at the Hague, engaged [illegible] onwealth. In [illegible] *Carolo I.* was [illegible] t was a slavish [illegible] and a violent attack on the regicides. Written in Latin, its effect was not likely to be great in England, but it would deepen the distrust and hatred of the Commonwealth abroad. Milton's answer, the *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, appeared in April, 1651. It meets Salmasius's arguments point by point, with reasonings which have more to do with quotations from authorities than with the principles in question, but its main end, and a politic one, since the weight of Salmasius's [illegible]

[illegible] without stint or modesty, by making him ridiculous as a henpecked husband—"an eternally speaking ass, ridden by a woman," is one of the last epithets—Milton made the *Defensio Regia* absurd in making its author absurd. The scholars on the Continent who were envious of Salmasius chuckled at the mauling their "wonderful one" had got from "the English mastiff." Complimentary messages poured in, Holland, France, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany were full of Milton's fame, and the Council of State returned him a vote of thanks and of money for his book in vindication of the Parliament and people of England And by this time, at the end of 1651, men's eyes abroad began to see that the Commonwealth was not to be despised. Cromwell had reconquered Ireland, the battle of Dunbar had been fought, Worcester had followed, and Cromwell was now at Whitehall, the chief of a great and established state.

Home Life and Blindness.—At the beginning of 1652 Milton left the official rooms he had occupied in Whitehall, and removed to a pretty garden-house in Petty France, Westminster, in which he lived for eight years. It was here that his eyes, much worn by his work on the *Defensio*, totally failed about the middle of 1652.

> "What supports me, dost thou ask?
> The conscience, friend, to have lost them overpli'd
> In liberty's defence, my noble task,
> With which all Europe rings from side to side."

A son had been born to him in March, 1651, but it had died an infant, and he was now alone with his daughters, the last and third of whom, Deborah, was born in May, 1652. It was about this time, when the quarrel between Cromwell and Vane had come to an abrupt close by Cromwell's expulsion of the Rump of the Long Parliament and dissolution of the Council of State in April 1652, that Milton wrote and sent his two sonnets to these men. The original title of the first explains its aim. *To the Lord General Cromwell, May, 1652, on the Proposals of Certain Ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospel.* That Committee was in fact set to consider the question whether the Commonwealth should have an Established or a Voluntary Church, and it decided in favour of the former. Milton's sonnet is an appeal to Cromwell, who sat on the Committee, to do away with a hireling Church.

> "Help us to save free conscience from the paw
> Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw."

The sonnet to Vane, in its appeal to him a
knowing what severs spiritual and civil power,
directed to the same end. Fully wrapt up in the
English questions, he was not so lost in them as n
to feel care for nations beyond England, and his let
written in June to Philaras, an Athenian, is of spe
interest. He speaks in it like a scholar of to-
who full of gratitude to Greek literature, longs

Greek liberty. "Whatever literary advance I have made, I owe to steady intimacy with the writings of the old Athenians from my youth upwards. Were there in me such a power of pleading, that I could rouse our armies and fleets for the deliverance of Greece, the land of eloquence, from her Ottoman oppressor,—to which mighty act you seem almost to implore our aid—truly there is nothing I could more desire to do. For what did even the bravest men of old or the most eloquent, consider more glorious or more worthy of them, than, by pleading or bravely acting, to make the Greeks free and self-governing (ἐλευθέρους καὶ αὐτονόμους). There is, however, something else to be tried, and in my judgment far the most important: namely that some one should arouse and rekindle in the minds of the Greeks, by the relation of that old story, the old Greek valour itself, the old industry, the old patience of labour. Could some one do *that* . . . . then I am confident neither would the Greeks be wanting to themselves, nor any other nation wanting to the Greeks."[1]

It is pleasant to come across a letter so full of interest to English literature in the midst of angry disputes; but its tone of apartness from strife was not long the tone of Milton.

Regii Sanguinis Clamor.—He had waited a whole year in vain for a reply from Salmasius who was "biting his thumbs at Leyden, in silence, not knowing how to salve his wounds and scars." Others however took up his defence, and among many pamphlets, one at last appeared about August, 1652 which called aloud for a reply. Issued anonymously its title was, *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cœlum adversus Parricidas Anglicanos*—The cry of the King's blood to Heaven against the English Parricides. It was able, scurrilous to excess, full of charges against Milton's personal character, and generally attributed to Alexander Morus. Morus was a Frenchman of

[1] See for the whole letter, Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. iv p. 444.

Scotch descent, who had been professor of Greek and a popular preacher in Geneva. Moving to Amsterdam he made a friendship with Salmasius, which was soon broken up by a domestic scandal.

Milton in 1653.—Milton did not answer this pamphlet at once. His health was infirm, he was grieved for his eyes; but being relieved in December, 1652, of the heavier details of his secretaryship which were put into Thurloe's hands, he employed the time thus gained in making ready the answer. While he waited, looking for Salmasius's attack, he was somewhat consoled for his ills by a new friend, who became his assistant secretary, clung faithfully to his fortunes and was worthy of his love. For it was late in this year of 1652 that he made the acquaintance of Andrew Marvell, whom he at once recommended to the Council for employment. The dissolution of the Rump of the Long Parliament by Cromwell in April, 1653, was approved of by Milton. He attested that approval at the time, if we may believe that the letter was his which Masson supposes was written to Marvell in the May of that year—*A letter to a gentleman in the country, touching the dissolution of the late Parliament.* Philip Meadows was now joined to him as assistant, and Milton did but little state work during the interim of Cromwell's dictatorship. Among other friends, Roger Williams, the colonist and president of Rhode Island, was frequently with him. His translations of Ps. i.—viii. and perhaps that of Horace, Ode v., Bk. i., were made this year. At the end of it he heard of Salmasius's death, and saw the Protectorate begin.

Defensio Secunda.—It was not till May, 1654, that Milton's answer to the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* appeared. Salmasius had died in September, 1653, and Milton fell upon the unfortunate Morus, who, he presumed, had written the book. A great part of the *Defensio Secunda* is a terrible, reiterated, and exhausting invective against Salmasius, Morus, and the printer Ulac, who had published the *Cry of the*

Royal Blood. Their lives and everything ill they had ever done are pitilessly raked up; again and again, like an unsated shark, Milton returns to the charge to draw fresh blood from his dead and living foes; it is the most merciless thing in our literature. He had some cause for this, for he had been shamelessly vilified by the author of the tract; and one great interest of his reply is that in it, in self-defence, he wrote a connected autobiographical sketch of himself, on which all those who have written his life have based their work.

Its Historical Interest is that, being written after the Protectorate was established, it gives Milton's view of that change of government. He repeats the chief charges against Cromwell and defends him again from them; he makes fine panegyrics on Bradshaw, Fairfax, and many other men of the Commonwealth, and a most noble one on Cromwell, in which he approves of the Protectorate, though not without delicate warnings of its dangers He bids Cromwell remember how dear a thing is the liberty now intrusted to him, and how disastrous it would be should he invade the liberty he had defended; and the liberty he implores him to defend is one which may be best preserved and established—by associating with him the wisest companions of his labours; by the taking away of the evil of a state Church; by refraining from over-legislation, keeping only those laws which restrain positive crime; by making better provisions for education; by doing away with all censorship of the press; and by giving absolute freedom to opinion. The point on which he was strongest was the disestablishment of the Church. It was the point on which Cromwell did not yield an inch; he did not answer the cry of Milton's sonnet nor the prayer of the *Defensio Secunda.*

The Pro Se Defensio.—The chief person attacked by Milton suffered not only in reality, but in anticipation. Morus heard of the *Defensio Secunda* before it appeared, and caused it to be

plainly told to Milton that he was not the author of the *Cry.* Milton did not believe his denial, but before a year had passed by—partly in October, 1654, and partly in April, 1655—Morus replied in his *Public Testimony against the Calumnies of John Milton.* Milton had already finished his reply to the first part of this *Testimony*, but delayed it till he had also answered the Supplement of April. The completed book, the *Pro se Defensio*, appeared in August, 1655: in which he not only reiterates the immoral charges against Morus, but, in spite of the proof to the contrary, asserts that he is rightly called the author of the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor.* But he asserts it in a modified form. He maintains that though Morus may ot have written the pamphlet, yet that he made himself :sponsible for it. He asserts that Morus edited it, refixed a letter to it signed by his name, wrote the efamatory iambics at the end, and took the credit of ıe work until the storm arose. And all this, except ıat Morus wrote the abusive iambics, seems to be ue. The thing not true is the authorship of Morus. 'he real writer was Dr. Peter du Moulin, sometime :ctor of Sheldrake, near York, who himself in 1670, laimed the authorship, and declared that Milton when e wrote the *Pro se Defensio* knew that the *Clamor* as not written by Morus, but by himself: but preferred my getting off scatheless to being found in ridiculous position himself." I cannot bring myself) believe that Milton knew who was the real author, ut it seems plain that he was carried away by the eat of controversy into an unworthy position. Independent of the inexcusable ruthlessness of his pursuit Morus' character, he strove hard to make him :sponsible, on the ground of a single letter and of ıe editorship, for the whole of the pamphlet. Masson ıys that after the *Pro se Defensio,* Milton preserved a dignified silence" on the matter. It does not seem dignified silence, and it does seem that, so far as ıe personal controversy goes, Morus occupies a etter position than Milton.

The End of the Controversial Peri
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The End of the Controversial Period of Milton's life draws near, and we are heartily glad to leave behind us the records of his personalities. Full of the deepest interest while they are autobiographical, they are worse than uninteresting when they are biographical of an opponent. Milton was not an amiable man, when he was traversed, either at home or abroad. He was pleasant with his friends when his friends were fond of him and gave back his courteous praise; he was pleasant when he was happy, and being more happy when he was young, he was pleasantest then. But he could not bear with patience domestic misfortune which he had brought on himself; he was a severe father and husband; and when he was attacked by an adversary he returned the blows, not only for the sake of justice and truth, but also because he was injured in his proud self-esteem, with an unequalled ferocity His intense individuality made him all the more unfit for personal controversy; but much of the bitterness and violence of the manner is to be accounted for by the painful repression for so long of his true nature, and by the sacrifice of his natural work. But with all a [illegible]

[illegible] himself loose, and, leaving the disputes and passions of earth, soar into the poetic air in which alone he breathed with ease and pleasure and triumph He loved beauty, not only the beauty of [illegible]

[illegible] the music of the crowding imaginations into which he shaped the messages his celestial patroness, Urania, sent him, he kept himself to the work he thought needful for his

fellow-citizens, and waited quietly, until all other work was done, to do his greatest work.

Home Life and Second Marriage.—During this last controversy, we only hear his lofty music in one noble poem, the sonnet *On the late Massacre in Piedmont*, written after the letter he had put into Latin for the Protector and sent to the Duke of Savoy, in July, 1655. During the winter, "being now quiet from state adversaries and public contests," he fell back on the work of his three large compilations; and seeing many friends, Lady Ranelagh, Cyriack Skinner, Henry Lawrence, and others, was happy and at rest. The gentle and patient sonnet to his blindness, and the resolute one on the same subject addressed to Cyriack Skinner, belong to this time; and the more cheerful and artistic side of his life is revealed in two social sonnets to Lawrence and Skinner, in which he invites them to supper. In reading, composing, and in writing state letters, the time wore quietly away till the 12th of November, 1656, when Milton married his second wife, Katharine Woodcocke; and nearly four months afterwards a letter to Emeric Bigot speaks of his calm and patient life. "I am glad to know," he says, "that you are assured of my tranquil spirit in this great affliction of the loss of sight, and also of the pleasure I have in being civil and attentive in the reception of visitors from abroad. Why, in truth, should I not gently bear the loss of sight, when I may hope that it is not so much lost as retracted inwards for the sharpening rather than the blunting of my mental edge." A blow fell upon him in the following February when he lost his wife, and in the last of his sonnets he records his grief, his love, his hope of meeting her in heaven. The only other literary work he did was to edit Raleigh's *Cabinet Council.*

The State Letters.—During the second Protectorate Milton remained in office, and was now assisted in it, in September, 1657, by Andrew Marvell. In August, 1658, the series of state letters

he had written for Cromwell closes five days before the death of the Protector. They number 132 in all, forty-four written during the Commonwealth and Cromwell's Dictatorship, eighty-eight during the Protectorate As the Protectorate lasted almost the

of Savoy and to the King of Sweden, we have the result not only of Cromwell's will and Thurloe's sense, but also of Milton's thought. Yet it was not as the Latin clerk that he had any fame during the Protectorate, but as the writer. "He was mightily importuned," says Aubrey, "to go into France and Italy. Foreigners much admired him, and offered him great preferments to come over to them, and chiefly came to England to see O. Protector and Mr. J. Milton, and would see the house and chamber where he was born." It was a time of quiet, so quiet that he took up at last his great poem. *Paradise Lost* was certainly begun and conceived as an epic before the close of the Protectorate, but the disastrous descent into ruin after Cromwell's death of the cause he loved, forced Milton back into politics.

From Cromwell's Death to the Restoration. —During Richard's Protectorate Milton was still *Latin Secretary*, and wrote seventeen state letters (the last two for the restored Parliament being the last he ever wrote) before the 25th of May, 1659, on which day Richard sent in his abdication. He did no more work of this kind, but he was nominally continued as Latin Secretary until the publication of his *Ready and Easy Way*, in March, 1660 The opinions of that pamphlet, the growing anti-Republicanism of the Council of State when it and Monk were left in the management of the State on March 16, were presumably the causes of his dismissal, and this is the probable date of it.

question of a free Commonwealth. Taken together, they fix Milton's political position during this period, and they are supplemented by two letters on the state of affairs to a friend and to General Monk. Milton had always been divided from Cromwell on the question of a State Church, and now with a new Parliament and Protector he hoped to gain a hearing on the subject. He divided the matter into two parts. "Two things there be which have been ever found working much mischief to the Church of God and the advancement of faith,—Force on the one side restraining, and Hire on the other side corrupting, the teachers thereof."

The first pamphlet addressed to the Parliament of 1659, took up the question of Force, and its title explains its bearing—*A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: Shewing that it is not lawful for any Power on Earth to compel in Matters of Religion.* He argues this proposition under four heads and with absolute firmness. The last sentence is a direct attack on Cromwell for his support of a State Church. "Had he (the magistrate) once learnt not further to concern himself with Church affairs, half his labour might be spared and the Commonwealth better tended." Milton's political position now becomes clearer. He had supported the Protectorate in the *Defensio Secunda*, but with warnings given to Cromwell of the dangers it might bring to liberty; and as time went on he saw the wisdom of his warnings. His republicanism could not have approved of the measures of Cromwell in the latter years of his government, and we find him ominously silent on political matters during those years. But he was a personal friend of Cromwell, and in state employ. He would then content himself with silence, especially as he could see no chance of things being bettered by opposition. Now however that Cromwell was dead, and he himself still employed by a Republican Parliament, he broke silence, and in this treatise of *Civil Power*, expressed not only his blame of

Cromwell's State Church policy, but plainly ranged himself on the side of the Old Republican party. A letter from one of this party (Moses Wall), quoted by Masson, accepts him as one of the good old cause.

The second pamphlet fixed his position even more plainly. It was put forth in August, 1659,—*Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church.* It abolishes tithes, and does away with all taxation of any form for the support of religion; it makes the payment of ministers wholly voluntary. The former pamphlet disestablished, this wholly disendows the Church. It contains an additional reflection on Cromwell for making the Church his ward—"to subject her to his (the magistrate's) political drifts and conceived opinions by mastering her revenue, and so by his Examinant Committees to circumscribe her free election of ministers is neither just nor pious!" The prefatory address to Parliament separates him still more from the Cromwellite party. He calls the Parliament—that is, the remnant of the Rump whom Cromwell had dissolved "the authors and the best patrons of religious civil liberty that ever these islands brought forth" The next sentence is still more remarkable. "The care and tuition of whose peace and safety, *after a short but scandalous night of interruption,* is now again, by a new dawning of God's miraculous providence among us, revolved upon your shoulders." The phrase in italics has been thought to be a reference to Cromwell's Protectorate. If so, Milton's action now would be a violent reaction, considering he had been with Cromwell all these years; and the phrase seems not only unworthy of their long association, but scarcely reconcilable with the phrase in the *Defensio Secunda.* It may be that it refers, as Masson conjectures, to "the fortnight or so of 'Wallingford House usurpation' which broke up Richard's Parliament and Protectorate," but it certainly looks like the other. At any rate the whole drift of the address and the treatise is against the measures of the

Protectorate and in behalf of the ideas of the Republicans of the Parliament.

A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth, written after Lambert had driven out the Parliament on October 13, begins Milton's political recommendations. In the anarchy then prevailing he left the question of a State Church aside and turned to the question of the right form of government. In this letter he sketches a constitution, formed of a Council of State and an Army Council, both bound by a solemn oath to support each other, to establish liberty of conscience, and to resist Monarchy. But bold as Milton seemed, he had not much hope of good; things seemed to him "worthier of silence than of commemoration. What is needed is not one to compile a history of our troubles, but one to happily end the troubles . . . . amid these our civil discords or rather sheer madnesses." The course of affairs was not likely to make him less despondent. No sooner was the Rump Parliament restored than Monk marched into London, and Milton, still hoping, prepared a new political pamphlet; but when Monk seceded from the Rump, when he brought back to Parliament the members who had protested eleven years ago against the Commonwealth and had been shut out in consequence, and when the Rump was "roasted" in the city, Milton felt that the Republican cause was lost. Still he would not give way, and on Monk being made Dictator he published his pamphlet, March 3, 1660.

The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth was a determined plea for a Republic against a Monarchy; full of fierce warnings and declamation against kings, and ending with a daring application of Jeremiah's cry against Coniah to Charles II. Modern democracy would hardly approve of its main suggestion that the government should be carried on by a Grand Council or Parliament of the ablest men, to sit in perpetuity and do their business by means of a Council of State; but the suggestion

agrees with Milton's view of a government of the best, and with his dislike, even his contempt, of the uneducated mob. Its argument and ideas were repeated in a private letter to Monk—*Present Means and brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth.* Both fell dead on Monk and the Parliament; royalism grew, Parliament was dissolved, and the Convention Parliament summoned, April 25, 1660. He now stood alone, with Lambert, against the whole nation.

Attacked on all sides, preached against by Dr. Griffiths, looked coldly on by the General and the Council, held up as fruit ripening for Tyburn, like Abdiel, "among the faithless faithful only," he set himself to resist to the death. His notes on Dr. Griffiths' sermon were followed by a second and enlarged edition of the *Ready and Easy Way*, in which he drew a fierce picture of the servile court and the overwhelming evils of monarchy. It was answered by two sharp pamphlets, *No Blind Guides*, and *The Dignity of Kingship asserted.* But Milton had no more to say. On the 8th of May Charles was proclaimed, on the 29th he entered London, and Milton, quitting his house in Petty France, lay in hiding against the storm—while his *Defensio Prima* and *Eikonoclastes* were burnt by the hangman—in a friend's house in Bartholomew Close, till the Act of Indemnity in August. For a time in custody, he was finally released in December, probably at the intercession of Sir W. Davenant, the new Poet Laureate, to whom Milton had done the same kindness under the Commonwealth. So closed the long battle of twenty years, and Milton, having done with Action, took up, not exhausted, Contemplation, poor, but rich in imagination, blind, but illumined with inward light—

> "He that has light within his own clear breast
> May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day."

PROSE WORKS AND SONNETS.

The Prose Works, as a whole, are not readable. They are controversial; the interest of most of their controversies is past, and they have all the vices of controversy. They descend to brutalities of personal abuse and recrimination; they are often coarse, they are full of the miseries of debate. It is only their force which, in their abusive passages, saves them from being revolting. We step from passages full of stately thought and splendid diction into passages which we are almost ashamed to read. It is the manner of the time, but it is not a pleasant manner. The arguments are always passionate, but they are intellectually arranged. Their arrangement, which is more on the ground the opponent occupies, his points one after another being taken up, than on the ground of ideas, makes them cold in spite of their passion. They are overloaded, piled up with metaphors, syllogisms, and cold sarcasms. Illustrations, quotations, old myths in new forms, texts, geography, all the kind of learning we find in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, are poured, frequently without careful choice, into the treatises. They are polemical, but it is inaccurate to call them theological, or to say that their controversy is religious. They are really, with few exceptions, treatises in defence of religious, civil, and social liberty. This was Milton's own view of them, and if we are not much interested in them, it is because the liberty they asked for is nearly altogether won.

But there is another side. They have, throughout, intellectual force, and the ease that comes of it. The impression of an intense individuality settles down on us, as we read, like a physical weight. Their ardour for, and their belief in, the things maintained; the sense of a great moral power accompanying them, makes on us that impression of distinct and powerful character

which in itself is a great part of style. Their manner is always victorious; an audacity and a defiant life fill their controversy. At times they rise into an eloquence which has nothing like it in English literature for grandeur, and music, and splendour. This eloquence is mostly found in passages that have been inspired by religious rapture. But his philosophic love of [illegible]
as on [illegible]
him. [illegible]
these eloquent hours—

> "Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
> Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
> To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
> That dumb things would be moved to sympathise."

Perhaps he is greatest of all when he binds up religious rapture and the passion of liberty into one, and pours forth prayer to God in behalf of freedom. But I do not think such passages are pure prose. Milton himself prefaces his outburst about "Zeal" by saying, "That I may have leave to soar a little." And they have the kind of construction he uses in blank verse, and their music is like that of *Paradise Lost*, a music like a fugue, overlapping and involved. What Jubal did, Milton does here in these organ-passages,

> "His volant touch
> Instinct, through all proportions low and high
> Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue"

He is nearly at his best as a prose writer in the *Areopagitica*—he is quite at his best in the simple and noble pieces of defensive autobiography

Sonnets.—The Sonnets of Milton belong mainly to the period of his prose writings The ideal sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines distributed into two systems. The first system consists of the first eight lines, and should be complete in itself; the [illegible]

first sonnet a composition in the Petrarchian stanza. The first was written on leaving Cambridge, the second at Horton. Five Italian sonnets and a canzone follow, and were written in Italy. The eighth was written in 1642, and the last sixteen when he had entered into the noises of his controversial career. Then

> "In his hand
> *The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew*
> Soul-animating strains."

Johnson said, "three of them were not bad; that Milton's was a genius that could hew a colossus out of a rock, but could not carve heads on cherry-stones." It is a strange judgment. If anything is remarkable in Milton's sonnets it is their noble manner. *The three controversial* ones, on the Divorce Tracts, and on the Forcers of Conscience, fall below the stately level, but that is to be expected. The last of these three is forcible enough, and Milton, as if he thought the subject transgressed the dignity of the sonnet, separated it from that form of verse so far as to add a tail to it. It was a sonnet *con coda*, a form used by the Italians in satire. The two first are *jeux d'esprit*, and, like all Milton's works of that kind, awkward and lumbering.

Four were written to women. Because Milton was bitter against the bad woman in Dalila, because he held strong views on the supremacy of man, it has been too much forgotten how much he loved and honoured women. The Tracts on Divorce speak of the comfort, "ravishment," and support in matters of love, in home life, in intellectual conversation, in piety, and in civil concerns, which a man may have of a woman The "honoured wife of Winchester" earned his early praise; the Italian sonnets, in the midst of their conceits, seem to record a real passion, though a brief one, and they are touched with a dignity which, more even than the phrases used, mark his reverence for his lady. The Lady in *Comus* will not be used to support the theory that he despised women though he made them inferior to men she is

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as noble in intellect as in purity. All through *Paradise Lost*, Eve's intelligence is only less than Adam's: she has many fine qualities, mostly the poetic ones, which Adam has not, and even after her fall the reverence of Adam for her is insisted on. His love for her never fails; it is made supreme. And here, in the sonnets, he sketches, with all the care and concentration the sonnet demands, and each distinctively, four beautiful types of womanhood—the "virgin wise and pure"; the noble matron, "honoured Margaret"; the Christian woman, his friend, whos "works, and alms, and good endeavour" followed h to the pure immortal streams; the perfect wife, whc he looked to see in heaven—

> "Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shine
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The personal sonnets have great and solemn be the beauty that belongs to the revelation of a great spirit. We may well compare the first sonnet, with its quiet self-confidence, its resolved humility, its aspiration to perform the great Taskmaster's work, with the sonnet written, twenty years after, on his blindness, in 1652. It looks back over many sorrows and tumults to the earlier one; and, depressed by hi ...ndness, he thinks how little has been, and ma ...e done; but deep religious patience helps hi ...nk that God works, and that

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ss ; so that at length they were all; even the eldest
so, sent out to learn embroideries in gold and
lver." This is Phillips' account, and it stirs our
ity for the children. But it is plain from Milton's
vill, in which he leaves the portion due to him from
Mr. Powell "to the unkind children" he had by his
first wife, that there was undutifulness on their side.
Christopher Milton gave evidence that Milton had
complained to him that "his daughters were careless
of him being blind, and made nothing of deserting
him." Elizabeth Fisher's evidence declares that
Mary Milton had said, on hearing of her father's
ding—"that that was no news, but if she could
of his death that was something:" and that
ton had further told her, "that all his said children
combine together and counsel his maid-servant to
eat him in her marketings, and that his children had
ade away some of his books and would have sold
e rest of his books to the dunghill woman." It is a
iteous picture on both sides of the account; and the
nly spot of light in it is that his youngest daughter
Deborah, who was Milton's favourite, and who was
only eleven years old when he was in Jewin Street,
may not have been so bad as the rest. She certainly
used to speak of him with fond enthusiasm when
she was an old woman.

Friends, however, still clung to him—Lady Ranelagh,
Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Needham the political
writer, young Lawrence, Cyriack Skinner, Dr. Paget,
Edward Phillips, his nephew who helped him in his
literary work, and Thomas Ellwood the Quaker who
became one of his readers. At Dr. Paget's recom
mendation, Milton now married, while he was still i
Jewin Street, Elizabeth Minshull, of a good Cheshi
family, a wise and kindly woman, who kept her hou
and her husband excellently well. Shortly after t
marriage he lodged at the house of Millington,
bookseller of Little Britain, who used to "len
guiding hand to his dark steps," and then, in 1
took a house in Artillery Walk, leading to Bu

Fields, where he remained ten years, until he died.

Milton's last Works.—It was here that he com- [illegible]

his *Artis Logicæ*, 1672; and his *Latin Accidence*, 1669. He continued to work on the collection of materials for a *Dictionary of the Latin Tongue*. In 1673 he issued a *Tract on True Religion*, in which I regret to say his toleration failed him. He urged Protestants to join their forces against "Popery," and, while they refrained from punishing "the Papists" in religion or property, not to tolerate the public or private performance of their rites. A compilation, *A Brief History of Muscovy*, was published after his death in 1686. In 1673 he republished, with some additions, his early poems; and in the next year, the year in which he died, his Familiar Epistles in Latin appeared, and with them the Academical Exercises at Cambridge, and a translation of the *Declaration of the Poles on the Election of John Sobieski*. This was his last literary work.

Milton's Mode of Life during these ten years remained unchanged. Once, in 1665, during the violence of the plague, he stayed in Buckinghamshire in a house taken for him by Ellwood at Chalfont St. Giles. After the Great Fire and the publication of *Paradise Lost*, his reputation grew. Numbers of visitors and foreigners came to see him, "much more than he did desire." Among the rest was Dryden who, on reading the epic, broke out—"This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too!" He received his friends at six in the evening and talked to them till eight. There was then a supper of olives or some light thing, and after supper he smoked his pipe and drank a glass of water and went to bed at nine. He rose early, at four in summer and five in winter, and after listening to a chapter or two in the Hebrew Bible,

"contemplated" and worked within himself. At seven his man came to him again and then read and wrote for him till the midday dinner. After dinner he used to walk in his garden or play on the organ, and either sing himself or make his wife sing, and the rest of the afternoon was given to work. There were daily about him "persons of man's estate who greedily catched at the opportunity" of reading to him, of writing from his dictation, and of assisting him in the many references, books and maps he had to consult during the composition of his later works. The old man, whose eyes seemed still clear, and whose beautiful hair still fell upon his shoulders, had many helpers, and the house was pleasant. His own talk was "extreme pleasant," intermixed with satirical humour. He was grave, though not melancholy, or not until the later part of his life, and had "a certain serenity of mind, not condescending to little things," yet bright through his sadness, and not to be subdued with pain. "In his gout fits he would be very cheerful, and would sing," and his daughter Deborah used to say that he was "delightful company; the soul of the conversation," on account of "a flow of subject and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility." He loved the "urbanity which comprehends not only the innocent refinements and elegances of conversation, but also acuteness and appropriateness of observation and reply,"[1] and Vossius and Heinsius speak of his courteous, and gentle, and affable, and contented ways. He loved hospitality; to have "mirth that after no repenting draws," to indulge, by the fire on a sullen day, the cheerful hour, to have the neat repast

> "Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
> To hear the lute well toucht, or artful voice
> Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air.
> He who of these delights can judge, and spare
> To interpose them oft, is not unwise."

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[1] *Christian Doctrine.*

Yet no one could be more temperate. He was very sparing in the use of wine, abstemious in his diet, not fastidiously nice or delicate in his choice of dishes, "eating and drinking that he might live, not living [illegible] ple, [illegible] eau-

"To wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song;"

nor to feel the celestial Light shine inward, and irradiate his mind through all her powers We know from *Paradise Lost* and *Samson* how deeply his blindness oppressed his heart, how "an age too late," he thought, in one of his sad hours, and a "cold climate" and years had damped his wing, how, cut off from the cheerful ways of men, and surrounded by cloud and ever during dark, he sorrowed that he could not see

"Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine"

Nor less did the state of his country afflict him. He fears for it, in the close of his *History of Britain*, the revolution from like vices, without amendment, of like calamities to those he has described His patriotic piety, has almost left him, he says, without a country. He heard around him the noise of Bacchus and his crew. But none can read *Paradise Lost* without wonder at a fulness of creative power which must have made him happy. He is no object of pity. And he had great allies and comfort. He thought of the old blind poets and prophets, and compared his fate, and perhaps his fame, with theirs, nightly he visited Sion and his flowery brooks; in his soul he felt the holy Light, "its sovran vital lamp;" the thoughts that "voluntary move harmonious numbers" were his food: Urania led him, an earthly guest, into the heaven of heavens, and when he returned to earth,

visited his slumbers, unimplored, and while he slept dictated to him and inspired—

> "Easy my unpremeditated verse."

This was his inner life, nor does the picture of him given to us by an ancient clergyman of Dorsetshire, Dr. Wright, lessen but rather enhance our sense of its beauty. "He found John Milton, then growing old, in a small chamber hung with rusty green, sitting in an elbow chair, and dressed neatly in black; pale, but not cadaverous; his hands and fingers gouty, and with chalk-stones. He used also to sit in a gray coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air. And so, as well as in his room, he received the visits of people of distinguished parts, as well as quality."

Death.—His gout was hereditary, and he died of it, but so peacefully that none knew the moment that he passed away on Sunday, November 8. He was buried beside his father, in the chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate, November 12, 1674. "All his learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar," went with his body to the grave. So, at last he joined himself

> "With those just spirits that wear victorious palms."

CHAPTER IV.

PARADISE LOST.—PARADISE REGAINED.—SAMSON AGONISTES.

Paradise Lost was ready for publication at the end of 1666. The Archbishop of Canterbury performed his duty of licensing through his chaplains, and the Rev. Thomas Tomkyns, after some hesitation, chiefly caused by the lines 594–599, Bk. i., where the disastrous twilight of the sun "with fear of change perplexes monarchs," placed his *imprimatur* on the

cover. On April 27, 1667, Samuel Simmons, pub-

-1667

written in Ten Books, by John Milton. It was a small

preface, entitled "The Verse;" and by the prose arguments to the several books. The book, which was well got up and printed, sold for 3*s.*—about 7*s.* 6*d.* of our money—and the first edition was exhausted in eighteen months. Milton's receipt to Simmons for 5*l.* more on April 26, 1669, tells us that the first edition

The second
death, was
ten. Three

new lines were added to the beginning of Bk. viii. and five to the beginning of Bk. xii, Bks. vii and x. being each divided into two. Commendatory verses were inserted at the beginning by Barrow and Marvell, but still greater praise than these gave him

but said in his preface that the original was undoubt-

1678, and 3*l.* more "in full payment of all my right, title, or interest which I have or ever had in *Paradise Lost;*" that is 2*l.* less than his original agreement. Simmons sold his copyright to Aylmer, who had published the *Epistolæ Familiares*, who again sold it, one half in 1683, and the second half in 1690, to Jacob Tonson, the well-known publisher, who set out the fourth edition, in 1688, by subscription; the third book, they say, so published in England. All the

est men of the day subscribed, Dryden and Somers
eing foremost in the work. It was in this edition
hat, under White's portrait of Milton, Dryden wrote
he lines so often quoted:—

> "Three Poets in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
> The next in majesty; in both the last:
> The force of nature could no further go:
> To make a third she joined the former two."[1]

The sixth edition was made remarkable by the annotations of Patrick Hume, and it was after the ninth that Addison's criticisms in the Saturday *Spectators* from January to May, 1712, excited a wider interest in the poem. Since then the editions are too numerous to mention. The poets Tickell and Fenton edited it, the latter with a pleasant life. Bentley edited it, and, under the supposition that Milton's amanuensis made mistakes in spelling and in words, inserted whole sentences, and amended it in his own fashion, "a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false." Bishop Newton's edition is with *notis variorum*. It is superseded by Todd's edition, and by Mr. Thomas Keightley's, and Mr. R. C. Browne's, all of them books well worth consulting. The last edition is one to which all who love Milton are deeply indebted, and the writer of this little Primer especially—*Milton's Poetical Works*, by David Masson.

Mode of Composition.—We have seen in the course of this book how the thought of a great epic grew up in Milton's mind, and how, between 1640–42, *Paradise Lost*, conceived as a drama, was present to his eyes. Four different drafts of it exist, and I have

[1] The thought is borrowed from Selvaggi's complimentary lines:—"Græcia Mæonidem jactet sibi, Roma Maronem;
Anglia Miltonum jactat utrique parem."

already mentioned that the lines—Bk. iv. 32-41—were written about 1642, and were designed for the beginning of the tragedy. At the age of fifty, at the close of the Protectorate, 1658, he began the poem in the House in Petty France, and all but completed it, according to Aubery, in 1663. It was in 1665 that he showed it, finished, to Ellwood the Quaker; the two years being probably spent in correcting and revising it. The Plague and the Fire delayed its publication till 1667. It was composed at intervals and dictated to his two younger daughters, or to his wife, or to any amanuensis that happened to be near. "I had the perusal of it," says Phillips, "from the very beginning—in a parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing, and having, as the summer came on, not being showed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, was answered that his vein never happily flowed but from the Autumnal Equinoctial to the Vernal, and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction, though he exerted his fancy never so much, so that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent but half his time therein." Richardson the painter has handed down some further details. That when he dictated, as we have seen, not only to his daughters, but to any one at hand—he sat leaning backward obliquely in an easy chair, with his leg flung over the elbow of it. That he frequently composed in bed on a morning—that when he could not sleep, but lay awake whole nights, he tried, but not one verse could he make. At other times flowed "'easy his unpremeditated verse,' with a certain impetus and œstro, as himself seemed to believe. Then, at what hour soever, he rung for his daughter to secure what came. I have also been told he could dictate many, perhaps forty, lines, in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

The Verse is blank verse, the unrhymed met-

five accents and ten syllables, first used by Surrey in his translation of the Fourth Æneid. When Milton says in his preface that his neglect of rhyme is an "example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem," he either did not know of Surrey's effort, which would be strange, or he chose to disdain it as a translation. It had long been the habit to use blank verse in the drama, and Milton had done it already in the *Comus*. In the drama many licences were permitted, nay, encouraged, and Milton uses these in *Comus*, and with more freedom still in *Samson Agonistes*. He keeps within stricter limits in the narrative blank verse of *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*, but he does use, in varying quantity through these books—a quantity varying towards increase in the parts where dialogue occurs—the "weak ending" of an additional syllable, and he admits feet of three syllables with frequency into his lines, instead of the regular iambus. Sometimes, but very rarely, he admits two feet of three syllables, lengthening his line thus to twelve syllables. And of course he uses, exactly as he thought most fit, the trochee, or the spondee, instead of the iambus, in the ordinary line of ten syllables. His *stops* occur most frequently at the end of the third foot, but they are fixed, according to his sense of poetic fitness, at the end of any of the ten syllables, and all who care for blank verse would do well to study them where they occur, and to ask the reason Milton chose then and there to place them. Their frequent change gives great variety to the verse, and often great beauty and force; but the variety is sometimes dearly bought, and then we reluctantly remember Johnson's judgment, that this way of producing variety changes the measures of a poet to the periods of a declaimer. When Milton recommended that "the sense should be variously drawn out from one verse to another," he recommended an excellent thing, but he made very large demands on his principle. It is almost impossible sometimes to distinguish, on hearing them, where Milton's lines begin or end, and

when that is the case, the fit idea of blank verse is wronged. There is a *natural pause at the end* of a line, and it ought not to be in the midst of a word, nor should it separate a qualifying word from the word qualified—a substantive from its adjective, a preposition from the word it governs, a personal pronoun from the verb that governs it, and into these faults, though rarely, Milton falls in his passion for variety. The *natural pause in the middle of the verse* in strictness obeys the same rules, but some have doubted its existence, and, at any rate, it has been so played with, that there is nothing to blame in Milton's constant violation of its rules, rules which, if carried out, would too much fetter the movement of blank verse.

When he demanded for true musical delight not only the sense variously drawn out from one verse to another, but also "apt numbers and fit quantities of syllables," he was thinking of his own practice. His apt numbers are well dwelt on by Dr. Guest. "Perhaps no man ever paid the same attention to the quality of his rhythm as Milton. What other poets effect, as it were by chance, Milton achieved by the aid of science and art, he *studied* the aptness of his numbers, and diligently tutored an ear which nature had gifted with the most delicate sensibility. In the flow of his rhythm, in the quality of his letter sounds, in the disposition of his pauses, his verse almost ever *fits* the subject, and so insensibly does poetry blend with this—the last beauty of exquisite versification—that the reader may sometimes doubt whether it be the thought itself, or merely the happiness of its expression, which is the source of a gratification so deeply felt."

As to the "fit quantities of syllables," I conjecture that Milton meant that in every line it was enough if the requisite number of accents were found, within the fair limits of the variety allowed to blank verse. He stretched those limits sometimes to their utmost extent, but when he did so it was not from

laziness or from an oversight. We may be quite certain that when so great an artist in verse, as Milton, was writing, lines which seem to us unmusical were made so with a purpose, and that we cannot rashly condemn them until we know his purpose. He insists on accents that seem to us most strangely put, in order that we may understand his thought more clearly; in order that he may express his thoughts in a very brief compass; in order that he may make some particular thought or particular thing in his description emphatic. Take one of the least musical lines in Milton, the last line of *Paradise Regained*, and accent and read it thus:—

"Hóme—to his móther's hóuse—private—retúrned."

It seems impossible to have pleasure in the awkward verse; but Milton wished to put all these thoughts and facts into one line, and he did it by his accents. Take two other well-known lines and read them as accented underneath—and they are as fine as possible.

"An'd—Tirésias and Phíneus—próphets óld."

"Búrnt—áfter thém, to the bóttomless pít."

It has been said that the following line has more than five accents; but Milton meant it to have only five. The accent in each of the three first couples marks that the description of the several kinds of similar things ceases—

"Rocks, cáves—lakes, féns—bogs, déns—and shápes of deáth."

In every case, especially where one word of one syllable is dwelt on so as to have the value of two syllables, the reader is called on by Milton to find meaning in his accentuation; nor do I know of a single instance in which the rule of five accents is really violated: though there are thousands of instances in which the accents are placed with a freedom, an audacity, an absolute carelessness of mere rule which are only lawful to a great artist. Nor may he use this licence

unless he happens to be writing at a white heat of imagination, and Milton, more cool in *Paradise Regained* than in *Paradise Lost*, fails in music when he is over-reckless in metre. We do not complain, we are delighted with the daring of

"Shóok the ársenal,—and fúlmined óver Gréece,"

but we do complain, and justly, of lines like these—

"But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles,"

• • • • •

"Such solitude before choicest society."

There is all the difference between the first and the two last lines that is made by the imagination on fire, and the imagination asleep or exhausted.

The Style is always great. On the whole it is the greatest in the whole range of English poetry, so great that when once we have come to know and honour and love it, it so subdues the judgment that the judgment can with difficulty do its work with temperance. It lifts the low, gives life to the commonplace, dignifies even the vulgar, and makes us endure that which is heavy and dull. We catch ourselves admiring things not altogether worthy of admiration, because the robe they wear is so royal. No style, when one has lived in it, is so spacious and so majestic a place to walk in. It is like the fig-tree he describes, which

"In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bending twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillared shade
High overarcht, and echoing walks between."

Fulness of sound, weight of march, compactness of finish, fitness of words to things, fitness of pauses to thought, a strong grasp of the main idea while other ideas play round it, power of digression without loss of the power to return, equality of power over vast spaco, of imagination, sustained splendour when he soars

"With plume so strong, so equal and so soft,"

a majesty in the conduct of thought, and a music in the majesty which fills it with solemn beauty, belong one and all to the style; and it gains its highest influence on us, and fulfils the ultimate need of a grand style in being the easy and necessary expression of the very character and nature of the man. It reveals Milton, as much, sometimes even more than his thought.

It has its faults. It is often, not only needlessly, but as it were of set purpose, involved; "not dense merely, but contorted or gnarled in structure," as Mr. Masson, with regard to certain passages, well says. It loses freedom of movement in its involutions; it delays too long, as it winds in and out, to express the thought or the image; it is rarely brief, even where brevity would be the life of thought. It is troubled with ellipses, and the inversions are sometimes, even when they are deliberate, wearisome. The Latinisms and forms of expression belonging to other languages are frequent, and have been much blamed, but they are a true part of the style, and the natural property of the man. But blame as we like, one thing is true, the style is never prosaic. The poetic form was Milton's native tongue.

The Cosmography.—The Universe in *Paradise Lost* consists of Heaven or the Empyrean, of Hell, of Chaos, and of our World.

Heaven is on high, indefinitely extended, and walled towards Chaos with a crystal wall, having opal towers and sapphire battlements. In the wall a vast gate opens on Chaos, and from it runs a broad and ample road, "powdered with stars," whose dust is gold, to the throne of God. The throne is in the midst of Heaven, high on the sacred hill, lost in ineffable light. In the hill is a cave whence the alternate light and shade of Heaven proceed, for the angels rest in sleep and wake to work. Around the hill is the vast plain clothed with flowers, watered by living streams among the trees of life, where on great days the angelic

assembly meets; and nearer to the hill is the pavement like a sea of jasper. Beyond, are vast regions, where are the blissful bowers of "amarantine shade, fountain, or spring;" among which in fellowships of joy sit the sons of light. The trees bear ambrosial fruitage and the vines nectar; the ground is covered each morn with pearly rain and the boughs with mellifluous dews. In the midst is the Fount of Life, shaded by the leaves and flowers of the Tree of Life, that also grows

> —"where the river of Bliss through midst of Heav'n
> Rolls o'er Elysian flow'rs her amber stream."

These regions extend infinitely, as varied in landscape as the earth—tree-clad hills and vales, woods, streams and plains; and among them the archangels have their royal seats built as Satan's was, far-blazing on a *hill, of diamond quarries and of golden rocks.*

Chaos is opened on by the great gate. It is a vast immeasurable abyss—

> "Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
> Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
> And surging waves."

Hot, cold, moist, and dry strive here for mastery. It is "the womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave"—*Noises loud and ruinous fill it,* but the loudest noise is where, on its frontiers, towards Heaven, Chaos and his consort Night, amid the warring elements, keep their pavilion.

Hell lies in the depths of Chaos, a fall of nine days and nights from Heaven. In its midst, and it is conceived as circular, is the bottomless lake of fire, into which pour the four rivers, Acheron, Phlegeton, Styx, and Cocytus. Around the lake a vast space of dry land extends, formed of solid fire, in one of whose hills Pandemonium was formed entire, and rose out of it, when formed, like an exhalation The City of Hell is afterwards built round Pandemonium on this dry ground of fire, an[illegible] country round the city is broken with

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, and plain. Further on, in another concentric
d, we catch a glimpse of a desert land, seemingly
ist, but giving no relief; full of rocks, caves, lakes,
s, bogs, dens, and shades of death, round which
the, like the fabled Ocean stream, flows in a circle,
d environs Hell. After that is the realm of cold,

> "Beyond this flood, a frozen continent
> Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
> Of whirlwind and dire hail—"

land of snow and ice, deep as the Serbonian bog,
over which Satan soars high on his way to the gate,
and the cold of which is as fire. Then come the
pounds of Hell, and the three-folded gates. Over all
is the concave vault of fire. This is Milton's geo-
graphy of Hell, within four concentric circles.

Our World as Milton calls it, the whole solar sys-
tem and the stars, is linked to Heaven and to Hell,
and in Chaos. It is a vast hollow sphere, hung at
its zenith by a golden chain from the Empyrean.
Its lowest point is distant from Hell as far as one of
its radii extend. It is this dark globe that Satan
sees from Chaos, by the light of Heaven, and on its
outer round he alights, as on a continent of waste
land. It is beaten by the winds of Chaos and has
only light on that side of it which is turned to Heaven.
At its very zenith a bright sea flows as of liquid
pearl, from which a mighty structure of stairs leads
up to Heaven's gate. Over against the stairs a passage
down to the Earth opens into the hollow sphere. At
this opening Satan looks in upon the starry heavens
of all this world, which fill the "calm firmament," and
flies amongst innumerable stars to the Sun and thence
to Earth the central point of the nine spheres.

Milton accepts then for his poetic uses the Ptole-
maic system, of which the Earth was the centre.
Around the Earth revolved the spheres of the Seven
Planets, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars,
Jupiter, and Saturn. The eighth sphere was the
firmament of the Fixed Stars, the ninth or Crystal-

line Sphere, was inclosed in the tenth the Primum Mobile or the First Moved, the last of the hollow shell. They all circled round the Earth with "a complex combination of their separate motions invented to explain the phenomena of the heavens." This is Milton's "*World*" When the souls who are destined to the Paradise of Fools fly upwards, Bk. iii. 481,

> "They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
> And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
> The trepidation talked, and that first moved."

He uses this scheme because it suited his poetic imagination, and because it was the scheme accepted by his youth. But he had seen Galileo in 1638, and says he "was a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and [illegible]

and shows his own knowledge of it in iv. 592–97. The angel hints that the question is obscure, but it is plain that whatever Milton professed, Raphael followed Copernicus. The Ptolemaic system is not adopted then by Milton because he held it to be the clearly right view of the universe, but because it was suited to his poetical wants. Lastly, as this vast sphere was linked to Heaven by its chain and staircase, so it was linked to Hell by the mighty causeway which Sin and Death had beaten together out of Chaos; high arched, and made fast with pins of adamant and chains to the outside base of this round world.

The Christian Doctrine.—The views of Milton in theology and religion at the time when he wrote *Paradise Lost* are of importance towards the critical understanding, even towards the poetic appreciation of the poem. They are contained in the treatise on *Christian Doctrine*, which was written at the close of

his life and finished after the Restoration. To read it is to know, and with great exactness, the views he held at the time when he was composing *Paradise Lost*. This treatise, entrusted to Cyriack Skinner by Milton, along with a collection of his letters to foreign princes and states, was not published in his lifetime. Daniel Skinner tried in 1676 to induce Elzevir to print it, but he declined. The papers were then taken away, and fell, we know not how, into the hands of the Home Secretary. In 1823 they were found in one of the presses of the Old State-Paper Office, Whitehall, inclosed in an envelope—"To Mr. Skinner, Merchant"; and shortly after, search being made, letters were found which proved the authenticity of the work.

It was the result of the labour of several years, of "constant diligence and an unwearied search after truth;" and it embodies the final principles of Milton's belief. He had written on the "three species of liberty—religious, domestic, and civil." The preface of this treatise declares that the Church cannot be disturbed by the investigation of truth. It is his object to "make it to appear of how much consequence to the Christian religion is the liberty not only of winnowing and sifting every doctrine, but also of thinking and even writing respecting it, according to our individual faith and persuasion. Without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel—force alone prevails—by which it is disgraceful for the Christian religion to be supported. Without this liberty we are still enslaved . . . . under the law of man, or to speak more truly, under a barbarous tyranny." These are words which seem to anticipate the Latitudinarians, and claim individual reason, exercised on the Scriptures with absolute freedom of discussion and inquiry, as the sole judge in matters of faith. Theological liberty was the last "species of liberty" Milton defended and exacted, and that he did it in his old age proves that he had not degenerated. It would be useless and impossible to go through this long treatise, and we are not investigating the theology of Milton; but there

are opinions laid down in it which concern the criticism and comprehension of *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, and I shall make short statements of these opinions. Milton holds:—

1. That God, as far as we are concerned to know, is of the form which He attributes to Himself in the sacred writings, and that He feels as He is there represented to do The presentation then of the Father in *Paradise Lost* is not only poetical, but actually as Milton conceived it.

2. God decreed nothing absolutely which He left in the power of free agents. God foreknew that Adam would fall of his own free will. His fall was therefore certain, but not necessary, since it proceeded from his own free will, which is incompatible with necessity.

3. All men are generally predestinated to eternal life—on condition of faith in Christ There is no such thing as eternal reprobation or eternal præterition. Predestination then is not only of grace, but also of the will and belief of men, and all men are given sufficient grace to believe, if they will Both these (2 and 3) will be found underlying *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

4 The Son of God existed before the world was made, but was not co-eternal with the Father, nor co-essential; nor co-equal He is not in any sense the supreme God; His nature and power are divine, but the nature is given and the power delegated. Nothing can be clearer than that Milton was a deliberate Arian. The argument is long, laborious, and resolute. That he was an Arian, makes passage after passage in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* clear. He did not dramatise heaven, as some have said, by dividing the Father and the Son. They *were* two Persons to him.

5. The Holy Spirit is a minister of God, a creature, created of the substance of God, probably before the foundations of the world were laid, but later than the Son and inferior to Him.

6. Matter was produced out of God, not out of nothing, and of this productive stock, in itself a substance and intrinsically good, all things were made; that is, form was given to them, for the *thing* itself is matter *and* form. Creation out of nothing is untrue, and since all things are thus of God, no created thing can be finally annihilated.

7. Souls are not pre-existent; the soul and the body are not two distinct things. The whole man is soul, and the soul man, an animated, sensitive, and rational substance. The spirit of man is partly human, but is inspired from God, and therefore is called the divine virtue, fitted for the exercise of life and reason, which is infused into the organic body. In each man the soul is born, and is produced by the power of matter.—If we keep these definitions in mind, much that is obscure in Milton will become clear.

8. The sin which is common to all men is that which our first parents, and in them all their posterity, committed, when, casting off their obedience to God, they tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree.

9. Its result is death. Death is, first, guiltiness; Adam's shame is death. It is, secondly, the loss of the right reason by which men discern the chief good. It is, thirdly, the death of the body: not the separation of soul and body, but the death of the soul, and the spirit, and the body; the death of the whole man.—All these three die, and all are raised together at the resurrection. It is, fourthly, eternal death, the punishment of the lost.—These are the four degrees of death, but the second does not exclude certain remnants of the divine image which are left in us, and not extinguished. For "if our personal religion were not in some degree dependent on us, and in our own power, God could not properly enter into covenant with us, neither could we perform, much less swear to perform, the conditions of that covenant."

10. Christ satisfied God's justice by fulfilling the law, and paying the required price for all mankind.

> "Die he, or Justice must; unless for him
> Some other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
> . . . . So Man, as is most just,
> Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die."

11. There is in Christ the union of two natures; but the divine nature is not of the same essence as the Father, and the divine nature was in partial abeyance during His life on earth. Being a creature, this divine Person was capable of temptation and of fall.

12. The decalogue is abrogated and is not binding on Christians. This may account for the omission of it in the Vision of Bk. xii. Milton was a strong anti-Sabbatarian.

13. Christ will reign on the earth during the times of the Last Judgment.

14. The world will be burnt up at the end; heaven [illegible]

[illegible]

fountain, the special virtues in general derive their origin.

16. Marriage was indissoluble before the Fall. Since then, divorce, nay, even polygamy, are lawful; fitting cause being shown. The man has absolute rule over the woman.

It is plain from many of these propositions that to call Milton Calvinistic is absurd.

The Interest of Paradise Lost is partly connected with its theology. The form of the poem is the epic form of the Greeks and Romans, and one of its interests as a work of art is Milton's conduct of the epic. The filling up of the form is partly invented and partly derived from Scripture. The character and the greater part of the action are invented; but the part derived from Scripture has a theological system attached to it. It is a true objection which says that this scheme of theology, so far as it intrudes, lessens the interest of the poem. It is not a true objection which says that it destroys that interest. And it is not

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its presence, but its presence in an *argumentative form*, which is alien to art. It chiefly appears in the talk of the heavenly persons, and in their lips it is necessarily divorced from the human passions which, when they play round a theological scheme, add to its interest. And the scheme, in itself, is abstract and logical and as such repugnant to art. One thing, however, belonging to the theology has grandeur, and is capable of artistic treatment. It broods over all these parts of the poem with its vast wings. It is the conception deepest in Puritanism and the source of its power—the overshadowing idea of the sovereignty of God. In the great struggle, God is always certain of victory.

The Political Interest of the poem belongs to this idea. God's sovereignty makes all other sovereignty and power nothing. A Puritan could not be an aristocrat, nor conceive of Heaven as an aristocracy. It is true God ruled all, but He ruled because He was pure goodness, and He asked obedience on that ground. That is not the imperial ground of rule, and Milton does not give that title to God. He is the Almighty Father, the King of Heaven, never the Emperour. That title is reserved for Satan. Beneath God's rule, though there are orders and degrees, all are equal and free. The Heaven of Milton is a republic, if I may use the term, under the sway of Infinite Goodness. Satan rebels because the Son is placed over the angels who are free and equal. Abdiel allows the equality and the freedom, but defends the supremacy of the Son by saying that the Son is the visible form of God, and at one with God, and that things remain as before. The only change is that now, through the creation of the Son, through God Himself becoming as an angel, He has lifted the whole angelic body into higher dignity—

> "And of our dignity
> How provident He is, how far from thought
> To make us less, bent rather to exalt
> Our happy state under one Head more near (*to himself*)
> United."

The whole of the arguments used in Bks. v. and vi. go to prove that Milton's order of Heaven

and intellect and goodness to rule the rest. All through his work, both in prose and poetry, Milton had a dislike, not so great as Shakspere's, but still great, of that democracy which means the rule of the majority. But he hated still more the oppressive and tyrannical rule of irresponsible force, and he has shown what his view of it is in Satan and his Hell.

it a picture of his own rebellion, and those who think so must have but slightly considered their Milton. He saw rather in Satan the picture of the tyranny against which he had fought—the adversary, such as Charles had been, surrounded by Belial and Moloch and Mammon, the representatives of sensuality, and oppressive force, and evil wealth, and by Beelzebub, in whom I have often fancied we may trace the lineaments of Strafford (Bk. ii. 300)

The Interest of the Story itself is not only of the story, but of the problem and struggle it represents, the problem of the origin of evil, the struggle of a moral being against evil without him The latter is the artistic motive of the poem, and it has always, and in all literatures, interested mankind. It is the foremost subject of art. The story in Genesis is one of its forms; and it is of very little consequence, so far as the main interest goes, whether we take the story as literally true or not.
should make it wholly fabulous, we are yet excit

the temptation and the inward strife it causes. But the subject, as it came before Milton, had a special condition attached to it. He was obliged to conceive evil tempting those who had *never known* evil. That condition was fortunate, for it made the subject almost new—the primal contest of untried and simple goodness with evil. But it was also unfortunate, because it necessarily forced Milton to deprive himself of all the play of the complex passions stirred when evil from without meets good and evil within a man, and the abstraction of these passions and their results made his work extraordinarily difficult.

The inherent fault of the subject also belongs to this condition. We have no experience of the innocent position of Adam and Eve, and we cannot sympathise with their struggle against temptation except in imagination. So far our human interest in them is not great. But in proportion to the loss of that interest is the gain of our interest in the work of the artist. He is driven by his subject into pure imagination, pure invention. We are in a world of beings who belong to our common humanity, but without the all-modifying element of evil. Where they are apart from us, the interest of the poem is in the artistic treatment; where they are at one with us, the interest is in the old human subject which all the great artists of the world have either touched or developed. To say the poem gives no pleasure, or that Adam, and Eve, and Satan do not interest us because we do not take the story literally, is simply not the fact. Why do people read *Paradise Lost?* First, because the story interests them; secondly, because of its fine passages; thirdly, for its art; lastly, for all these three wrought into a splendid whole and unity by the imagination of a great genius. *Paradise Lost* is one of the few universal poems of the world; imperial in the sense that the work of Homer and Virgil and Dante and Shakspere is; worthy to exercise command over the heart and intellect of all ages. Its majesty and beauty are beyond praise; its faults should be spoken

of by smaller men with truth, but with reverenc
But all may tell of the pleasure that it gives them, an
strive to find the sources of that pleasure, and th
more fully any one can do this, the more he will fe
his soul enlarged. It is this I have endeavoured
do in the following pages.

PARADISE LOST.

The First Book.—The subject is "Paradise Lost
—"Of man's first disobedience." In asking ho
it was lost, Milton introduces the author of its los
and the poem opens with the description of Sat
in Hell, awaking to the consciousness of his rui
The story of Heaven lost to him prepares our thoug
for the story of Paradise lost to man. He gathe
his whole host together, resolves on war by gui
since force is unavailing, and, telling of a ne
world on which they may seize, and the fame of whi
he had heard in Heaven, calls a council in Pand
monium, "suddenly built out of the deep," whe
they may resolve how to hurt God by an invasion
evil into the new made Earth. In this way, thoug
with a vague and undefined touch, the main subje
is impressed upon our minds, and from the ve
beginning we look forward to Man as the hero
the epic.

But what a way it is, and through what a splend
range of pictures we are led! The force of co
ception never fails. The interest, step by step wi
the gathering of the host of Hell, is slowly accum
lated to the point where Satan reaches the heig
of his thought, and sorrow, and invective It is li
the growth of a thunderstorm, from its rising in th
horizon to its outburst in the zenith At first Hell
silent—then the fallen archangel awakes and loo
around him in sorrow, and this solitary picture
him isolates him for ever in our imagination. H
calls on Beelzebub, and the passion of th

begins in the mingled mournfulness and pride of the speech. Together they make their way to the burning shore, and the two figures stand alone, hewn into reality by Milton's sculptural imagination. The rest lie tossing and astonied on the fiery lake, and the fierce scorn of Satan's awakening summons has less of sorrow now, and more of pride. The interest deepens and the picture fills as the whole host hover on wing under the cope of Hell and light upon the plain. All Hell is now awake. The mental progress of the angels is the same as Satan's. At first confused and sorrow-stricken, they soon marshal their armies in array, and, when the great banner is unfurled, their sorrow yields to fixed thought, deliberate valour succeeds to rage, and waving their ten thousand banners, they await their chief's command. One would think, so magnificent is the scene, that the imagination could be no further lifted. But at this very moment Milton, rising majestically, creates the noblest speech and picture in the Book. Pride, sorrow, splendour of imagery, and splendour of resolve are mingled into the image of Satan and in his words; and these are reflected in the description of the host and their passion, till, at the word of war, "millions of flaming swords out-flew," and the climax at last is reached. Throughout, the grandeur of the picture has increased with the growing grandeur of the thought. The book is built on the same lines as those of David's noblest psalms—an outburst of impetuous passion, swelling, and rising in the midst into intensity; then slowly dying down, with touches of soft beauty at the close, and relieved in the descent by episodes of thought which unite themselves, though at a distance, to the main subject. The episode, in which the leaders of the host are described, as they will be afterwards worshipped on earth, occurring before the climax, serves to lower the pitch of excitement to the point at which it can be roused again without weariness. When the descent begins after the climax, the episode of the building

of Pandemonium relieves yet fills the lurid picture, and animates and lightens Hell itself The tale becomes less and less sombre, and before long is made beautiful. The lovely and learned play of Milton's imagination diversifies it. Architecture is brought in with the recollected pleasure of one who had seen the Pantheon, and classic fable adds itself to art, and two similes, one of bees busy in a dewy land and one of faery sport in the forest, bring us clean out of the murky air of Hell. These images serve to rest the imagination, wearied with the strain so heavily laid upon it, and the work is like that of Nature herself, when, at the dying of the thunderstorm, she fills the western Heavens with passages of tender coloured cloud and sky. A few lines, at the end, which describe the great lords in council, nobly re-introduce the subject.

Book II.—The Second Book begins with the council which decides that the *ruin of man* shall be attempted. An episode then describes the employments and amusements of the rebel angels while they await the news of the ruin of man, and the rest of the book tells of Satan's meeting with Sin and Death, whom he calls on to follow him to the task of the ruin of man. At every point, even to the last moment, when the Ruiner sees, beyond Chaos, the new world within whose sphere Earth lies, we are directed to the main subject, and wait, with a kind of awful expectation, for the appearance of Adam, around whom and whose fate, all Hell and all its indwellers are thus gathered. Yet, in face of this, and of the similar collecting of all the interest of Heaven around Man in the next book, there are critics blind enough to say that Satan is the hero of the epic

Milton's intellectual force is nowhere better shown than in the speeches of the conclave. Satan's brief introduction of the debate is more proud in its assumed humility than his loudest boasting; and Milton's object is to deepen our sense of his pride and his isolation.—"I was first in Heaven; I rst

now, but only by your choice. It were possible to envy the highest in Heaven, but in Hell, where pre-eminence of place means pre-eminence of pain, who would envy? Here, then, faction cannot be; we are more naturally united in Hell than in Heaven."—He makes revenge the key-note of the council.

Moloch declares for open war—"If God cannot destroy us utterly, let us take what revenge we can; we cannot suffer more than now—more would be annihilation; and that would be better, if He can inflict it, than this endless misery."—This is the image of brute force in its despair, in its blind anger, in its hatred of pain and its weakness to endure it.

Belial, at the other pole of temperament and thought, replies, that a reason for war, grounded on despair, is of itself a reason against war. There is no room for revenge; God is unconquerable: and to be annihilated is not to be desired.

> "Sad cure, for who would lose,
> Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
> These thoughts that wander through eternity."[1]

"And is God likely to give annihilation? He is far to wise"—for Belial has sympathy with intellect, eve in God. Nor is the rest of his speech less full of th contempt of the highly cultivated intelligence for th brute bluster of Moloch. "What worse, they say, th this Hell? Is this quiet council of ours worse th being chained on the burning lake? We might be t fold more wretched did God choose it. Therefor give my voice for peace. Who will say it is vile to b in peace? It is not vile to suffer. We risked all, the law is just which says, Suffer now. I laugh at th who are bold with the sword, and not brave to

[1] It is the yearning of intelligence to always know itself, the ineradicable, unwearied curiosity of the Renaissance (no is the quintessence of its spirit better expressed), which M perhaps with intention, puts into the mouth of Belial. of knowledge as Milton was, yet, all through this epic, th *Paradise Regained*, through *Comus* even, he urges tempera knowledge as well as in life.

the doom they risked. And if we suffer quietly, our foe may remit His anger, our pain lessen, or we become inured to it, or time bring better chance." —This is the image of intellectual culture, without goodness, made soft by sin, in a nation decayed by luxury, and enslaved.

"War means, answers Mammon, either to disenthrone God, or to regain our place. The first is impossible, the second unacceptable. Suppose He gave us back our place, could we serve Him, spend an eternity in servile worship of one we hate? Let us seek our good from ourselves, build a free empire here, and win use out of ill-fortune, and ease out of pain. Our world is dark, but we have skill to make it magnificent: and, by length of time, our torments may become our elements, native to us, and be no longer pain. Dismiss all thought of war."—This is the image of the empire of godless utility and wealth, of that world which says, Man shall live by bread alone.

All Hell applauds the speech. Then Beelzebub—a sublime picture of a great minister touched with a gleam of far-off beauty from another world than hell,

or war? God will rule Hell as Heaven Hell is His empire, not ours Peace will not be given, nor can we return it. War has been tried, and we are foiled But we can study a less dangerous enterprise which will 'surpass common revenge.' There is a new world, and indwellers in it, in whom God takes pleasure. We may spoil His pleasure by ruining His creation." The advice unites those who wish for war and peace In the silence that follows the question, Who shall go—Satan claims the quest, and Milton, in his manner, closes the dark deliberation with a sweet natural simile, out of place perhaps, but serving, as before, to relieve the over-tasked imagination.

Of a true Hell there is nothing here The speeches

are those of ambitious rebels against rightful pow
It is not defenders of freedom that speak, but fall
and tyrannous aristocrats. Nor are the amusemer
of Hell, in the episode which follows, natural to th
dark dwelling. The Homeric games, the philosophi
discourse on retired hills, the music and heroic song
the silent valley, the "bold adventure to discover wi
that dismal world," take our thoughts away from He
Save in the first circle, we do not meet such pictu
in Dante's actual Inferno. There is no true horror
pain in Milton's hell. He never *saw* the damned.

The poet now concentrates all his force on t
solitary figure of Satan. Two mighty similes, o
where he is seen on his way to the gates like a fl
hung in the air; the other, when he meets Dea
and seems *incensed* as a comet firing the length
Ophiuchus, enlarge our vision of "the Adversar
Death's image has claimed admiration, and justly; b
if the lines, which leave him indefinite yet "terri
as hell," are sublime, the rest of the allegory
him and of Sin is so definite, so conscious of allego
that it loses sublimity. Nor does the vision of Cha
add much to the poem. At last we pass out of t
elemental war and see the lovely vision of t
Empyreal Heaven, and hanging from it, in a gold
chain, the pendent World; that is the whole sph
in which earth, and sun, and planets, and stars a
contained.

Book III. begins with a beautiful and perso
invocation that leads us at last into Heaven.
the Second Book opens with the council in Hell,
the Third opens with the council in Heaven. T
dramatic interest is less, but some interchange
thought is preserved through the conversation of t
Father and the Son by Milton's Arianism, which mak
the Son a distinct person from the Father. T
whole effect, however, is dull. It is not that G
the Father "reasons like a school divine," but rath
that he expounds like a sectarian of the time;
school divine would have made the Fall of man t

starting-point of theology, nor placed so much power in the will of man The coldness of the discourse transfers itself to the verse. When it is over, the employments of Heaven are described, as, in the Second Book, after the council, the employments of Hell. They are not as varied as those of Hell, and

o'er Elysian fields her amber stream." The council has been of man's faith and fall; the songs of praise are for the mercy to be shown to man after his Fall. All Heaven, as in the previous book all Hell, is concentrated on Adam. Again we expect his coming.

We draw nearer to him now, the centre of the poem, for from Heaven we see Satan alighted on the outside of the World The rest of the book is taken up with his wanderings. There is a curious piece of mere fancy in the description of the Paradise of Fools, which adds nothing to the poem, and is like a vacation exercise, introduced because it wanted a place somewhere. Its controversial element and its

tion is nobly at work, picturing him as a vulture searching for prey: till, coming to the opening in the great roof, another magnificent simile keeps up the notion of search, and paints him looking down into the heaven of this world and all its stars, as a scout who sees from a hill top at dawn an empire with its glittering cities on the plain We seem to accompany the flight of Satan through the sky and stars to the sun, so clearly do we see it through Milton's eyes. The description of the sun, where it attempts to be definite and scientific, is poor · but what can better the vividness with which Uriel is carved before our eyes, and with which the image of Satan, as a stripling cherub, lives in form, and colour, and clothing?

They stand before us as if they were moulded from the life, and their talk is more happy and natural than usual in Milton, and seems the talk of angels. The book ends in prospect of Eden. We are nearer Adam when we see Satan alighted on Mount Niphates.

Book IV., the most varied of all in interest and beauty, closes that part of the poem in which Satan is the chief figure, and introduces him to whom we have so long been looking forward, Man, the central figure of the epic. As before in thought, so here in action, all Hell, in the person of Satan; and all Heaven, in the archangelic interest of Uriel and Gabriel, and in the vision of the scales of God, are collected round Man.

The book opens with a cry for help against Satan, as if, in the vivid shaping of his imagination, the poet were present at the time and place: and through the invocation the subject is again brought forward. We look about and seek for Man. Satan, too, is on the search, and his speech on Mount Niphates is the key to Milton's strange estimate of his character. The change of his aspect during his outburst of wrath and envy is seen by Uriel from the sun, and prepares us for the vigorous incident at the end of the book.

We then enter the plain of Eden with Satan, and as the whole of the previous books has been a long preparation for the appearance of Man, so through nearly one hundred lines we are slowly led to Paradise, where Man dwells. Expectation, in Milton's manner, is kept on tiptoe; touch after touch is added to enhance what is coming, as when "of pure now purer air meets his approach." A splendid simile of the odorous winds wafted from Paradise lifts still higher our imagination, but it is somewhat spoiled, also in Milton's way, by a far-fetched allusion to the story of Tobit, and still more, by a reversion to the controversial cry of Lycidas against hireling wolves when Satan overleaps the wall. But we do not even then get to Paradise.

There is still a pause of expectation, and Milton moralises, and makes the map of Eden. Then at last is Paradise; and the lines he gives to it—in metrical weight and balance perfect—(how beautiful the sound of this—"Rolling on orient pearls and sands of gold;" and of this the thought and sound—"Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose;") are equal to the height of loveliness he seeks to hold, and rise at the close, when one would think music and loveliness could be no more—into fuller beauty and more enchanted music (223–268). A slight break, like an interlude, intervenes, and then we see Man, the hero of the epic—

> "Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall," 288, &c

Lines worthy of the long preparation!

We listen, and hear Adam speak, and the moment we touch Man, we presage, in Adam's words, his fall. There is but little to awaken our pleasure in the first words of Adam's speech and of Eve's reply; but when

has seen and envied them learns how to bring about

the stretch of this new expectation Uriel glides now from the descending sun to warn the angelic guard of Satan's coming Evening falls, and in the lines so harmonious with its softness, we pass from the excitement of the action to rest for a little on the breast of Nature.

The book might have closed here, but Milton only pauses for fresh creation It is the crisis of the interest of the first part of the poem, and now all the characters come on by night as before by day; Adam and Eve in the midst, and the others circled

round them. They are shown in the converse of love and innocence. Adam calls Eve to sleep; she answers, praising him, in verses, soft as her breath and as the tropic night; and Adam's answer, dull at first in its cold philosophy, passes into poetic beauty when he speaks of the unseen spirits of the Heaven; and his joy at their songs, heard as they haunt the garden, adds a new touch to the interest of Heaven in Man, and to the beauty of Paradise. Still Milton cannot leave these human creatures, his great subject. Their bower is described, their last prayer, their innocent passion, and their sleep. From noon to midnight we have heard the tale of their hours, as in the next book we hear it from morn to noon—a whole day. Then round them gathers Hell and Heaven. The moon shines on the clear picture of Gabriel's watch; on Ithuriel and Zephon dazzling through the garden; on Satan squatted like a toad by the ear of Eve. Touched by the spear he leaps to his full height; and his talk and that of the two angels in its interchange of stately scorn and anger, is not less dramatic than the vivid invention of Gabriel and the guard discerning through the shade the advance of the two angels, with the third "of regal port, but faded splendour wan." Nor is the strong speech of Gabriel and Satan unworthy of archangels; none but Milton could have conceived and expressed that meeting; and the last description, where "On the other side Satan *alarmed*," (nothing can be more noble than the use, and the placing at the end of the line, of the word) "Dilated stood," fills the whole scene with sublimity. Then God enters the action, also round Man, and hangs the scale of battle in the sky. The weight

the War in Heaven and the fall of the rebel angels, and the Creation of the World are introduced. But the episodes bear on the main subject, and enhance its interest before it comes and when it comes. The war in Heaven is not described to narrate Satan's fall so much as to warn Man against his own fall. The Creation is described to complete the story of Man; all is told to keep us in expectation of the next crisis of the poem, to which, in Bk. ix. Milton gives all his strength.

The book opens with Adam's waking of Eve, and with her relation of her dream in which the subject of the epic recurs, and the coming crisis is indicated. Adam's lecture on dreams has too philosophic an air, but nothing can be nobler in thought and verse than the great Hymn of Praise which follows. It is closer to the devout force of a Hebrew lyric and to the grand simplicity with which a Hebrew Psalmist realised God and Nature than anything I know in Aryan literature; and in its cosmical embracing of a whole creation may be compared not only to Psalm cxlviii., which it enlarges, but also to civ., the great psalm of the whole universe. It has its prologue down to line 159, followed by ten divisions, like the verses of a hymn, but of unequal length, and ending with an epilogue, if I may use the term, of four lines Like all Milton's greatest work. it dilates the imagination, and is worthy to be sung by the primæval Man and Woman. God hears their praise, and sends Raphael to warn them of danger.

Milton's angels are the angels of a painter. Of power and splendour and swiftness like Tintoret's, clothed and coloured like Angelico's, they are not described, they are made visible to the eye Uriel was glorious, but still more glorious is Raphael, springing [illegible] ging his [illegible] on the eastern cliff of Paradise. Neither Adam nor Eve, when they meet him, are lowered to our imagination by his presence. They are equal in sinlessness to him, they are only less as yet in ethereal nature, and Milton's

in this distinguishing of two different natures is
quisite. It is not so happy in the description of
eir dinner and in their discourse. But the conver-
ation, apart from poetry, is interesting. It gives us
Milton's conception of the physical nature of angels,
and his notion of matter and spirit and soul. Spirit,
in Milton's sense of the word, is etherealised matter
—the matter of which angels are made; and it is
into this that the body of Adam will change, if he
be obedient. But the soul *is* the man, and the
angel. "The whole man is soul," to quote Milton's
words elsewhere, "and the soul man."

The subject of the Poem recurs when Adam asks
what means the caution, "if we be found obedient,"
and the question introduces the warning story of
the angels who fell by disobedience. This is the
·ue chronological beginning of the epic. With
plendour of imagination, with sphere-music, made by
he angelic dance; and in verse which resounds with
that which it describes, the tale is told of the begetting
of the Son of God in whom God makes himself visible
to Heaven. The pleasure we have in the story is in
the royal verse, more than in the conception; I may
even say that the verse makes the conception seem
greater than it is. We return to the interest of passion
in the rise into rebellion of Satan's envy and pride,
mingled with the charm of his friendship for Beelzebub.
Pathos is added to his cry in Heaven, "Sleep'st thou
companion dear," when we remember how, in
darker place, he has already with the same cry, turne
to his friend. It is a lovely instance of the art
Milton.

The night journey of Satan's host to the No
fills the imagination, and is accompanied by the so
of God. Milton has been blamed for the deri
he puts in the mouth of the Father and Son;
he had his poetic authority in Psalm ii.; and
representation of God must be judged by the
sities of epic treatment. The book closes
the speeches of Satan, seen already as the grea

and Tempter; and with the noble vision of Abdiel,

[illegible]

unconsciously, perhaps consciously, drawn from his own position as he wrote. Fearless and compassed round with foes,

> "Nor number nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
> Though single."

Book VI. is filled with the War in Heaven. The materialism of which it has been accused seems to me apart from the point. Johnson says that the confusion between spirit and matter fills the narrative with incongruity. He does not know that Milton's "spirit" is matter etherealised; that the angels, in his view, ate, drank, digested, slept, could fight and be wounded, like Ares in the *Iliad*. He says that the book is a "favourite with children, but is gradually neglected as knowledge is increased" This however is not a question of knowledge, but of poetry, and of epic poetry. Milton needed battles and Homeric combats, and he used them frankly; and he desired to swell and enhance the final vision of the Son of God in His overthrow of the rebel angels. For two days he fills Heaven with noisy and violent war, that at the end angelic power might be as nothing before the silent single omnipotence of Messiah's coming. And the gradual growth of the battle to this terrific climax is poetical, and gives, not a perfect, but at times a splendid pleasure No one who cares for the poetry cares whether knowledge is satisfied or not The story and the things described stand on their own epic grounds, and stand clear The cannons are very clumsy, it is true, but we must remember we do not see them with Milton's eyes. Cannon, in his day, still impressed the imagination.

The book opens with Abdiel's return. T

s for war that meet him, his joyous reception, leading of him to the mount of God, the solemn ice of approval, changing suddenly to the command to Michael to go forth to war, the dreadful noke and tempest from the hill, and the march of e host, are all described in Milton's finest manner. The march may well be compared, and Milton meant it to be so, with the assembling of the hosts in Hell:—and mark how the continuous advance and the swiftness of both hosts, rushing to meet each other, are echoed in the verse. There is not a single full stop for thirty lines. The verse pauses only with the description of the great apostate on his chariot. Abdiel and he meet at the beginning of the fight with Homeric speeches, and in Homeric combat. It is the prologue to the battle, and surely never was the noise of battle, and the "ridges of grim war," and the swords that rose and fell, wide wasting, told in more terrible verse than that which follows, until Michael and Satan met, "while Expectation stood in horror." Their duel is inferior in force to the others in the poem, and the description languishes till night divides the armies. Nor is the council described with the mighty power of the council in Hell, and the introduction of science and its engines makes the poetical atmosphere hard to breathe. The scoffing jests of Satan and Belial may be paralleled from the *Iliad*, but they lower, as the whole scene does, the dignity of the poem; and it is lowered still more by the jingle of terms in the jests, the puns, and the quibbles—unfortunate relics of the Elizabethans. Nor is the answer the angels return to the cannon less below the place and the contest. Mountains hurled through the air disturb the conception of heaven, and are s perilously near the absurd that they jar on the solem sense one ought to have of the first conflict betwe good and evil. The only excuse is that Milt wished to enhance the last picture, but it is excuse enough. The dialogue which follows betw the Father and the Son is overweighted with t

mutual praise; and there are parts even in the last description, noble as it is, which were perhaps better away. Still, equal to the grandeur of the awful contest, and in poetry which seems, like the chariot and the wheels, to burn and bicker as it rolls, Messiah at last appears,

> "He onward came—far off his coming shone,"

and the battle is over. Eternal wrath, gathered into one mighty verse—

> "Burnt after them to the bottomless deep."

The last lines insist on the subject. The tale is a tale of warning, and the key-note of the first subject of the poem—man's disobedience—is struck again. However vast the circuit Milton makes, he returns to the same centre.

Book VII. begins with Milton's invocation to Urania to govern the latter half of his song. It has been objected to as unnecessary, but we should be sorry to lose the personal touches; nor does it injure, but enhance, the solemn impression of the poem to have a glimpse of the lonely singer, "on evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues, with darkness and with dangers compassed round"—whose soul was peopled with the vision of Heaven and Paradise while all around him waxed the "barbarous dissonance of Bacchus and his revellers,"—and the words suggest that after more than twenty years the imagery of *Comus* again presented itself to his imagination.

The theme of the book is the Creation. It was not written to put forth a scientific theory of the Creation. It is an episode in an epic, not a treatise, and Milton did not care whether the things said were true, or not, to fact. He uses any materials which he thinks poetical, and fitted for epic treatment. Sometimes he takes the Ptolemaic view of the Universe, and sometimes the Copernican, just as he wants them, just as he *saw* the thing. It is the artist who, wanting to impress us with the sense of Man being the centre of tl

the Earth the centre of Creation. It is the artist, who, in the next book, wanting to subordinate Man to the Omnipotence of God, sets Earth among the planets that dance about the sun their various rounds. Moreover he followed the account in Genesis i.; and long before his time that was held to be a poetic representation. Any way, Milton used it as such, for, according to his imaginative needs, he enlarges or modifies that account.

The opening conversation between Raphael and Adam, in which the Angel, in his warning against an intemperate desire of knowledge, suggests the coming temptation, weights the whole description of the Creation with the thought and sadness of the Fall. The same note of anticipation recurs in the next book, and I cannot draw too much attention to this method of work in Milton. He wins our interest in *Paradise Lost* by expectation, not surprise. It was the way of the Greek Dramatists, it was Shakspere's way. The audience know the conclusion, and wait for it. This is the finest way to work, but only a great artist has the power to do it well. For nothing which is represented as said or done in the Poem can then be left unmotived, or unbalanced, and no slipshod work can pass. The advantages of it are great, but only great genius can use them; and the conclusion being known, the way in which it is brought about, and its catastrophe heightened or softened, lies open to continuous criticisms, criticisms which, in a play or a story which rests on a surprise at the end, cannot be given until the story is finished. In Milton's work, expectation is everywhere, surprise nowhere.

The account of the Creation is connected by way of contrast with the preceding book, which is a book of war and destruction. The Messiah, there Destroyer, is here Creator; and the motive of the Creation is to repair the loss Heaven has suffered by the banishment of a third part of its indwellers. The chariot of the Son of God pausing on the shore of Heaven above

the abyss of Chaos, now outrageous from the tumult made by the fall of the rebel angels, is a splendid opening to the scenery of the Creation, but not more grand than the phrase—"Silence ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, peace." What follows is a series of descriptions, full of magnificent lines · and for those who wish to study Milton as a master of all the possibilities of blank verse, there is no book so well worthy of attention as Bk. vii. It is an amazing revelation of what a great artist in verse can do. Here, also, he allows himself to play with his vehicle, and being in the humour to make the sound the echo of the sense, fulfils his humour and delights to fulfil it.

The "broad bare backs" of the mountains upheaved into the clouds, the waters that hasten with

our eyes. The extremely involved construction of the passage that describes the heavenly host, leaves, if that be not my fancy, a sense of their involved multitude and movement on the mind. The fish that "glide under the green wave," or "bank the mid-sea," or "tempest the ocean," are as vigorously sketched: but with less beauty than the birds who "never looked so beautiful since they left Paradise." Compare, to give one example of the union of sound and sense, these two contrasted descriptions·—

> "There Leviathan,
> Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
> Stretcht like a promontory, sleeps or swims;"

and this of the prudent crane that steers—

> "Her annual voyage, borne on winds · the air
> Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes."

When all is over and Earth "consummate lovely smiled," Man appears. But as Man is the central personage of the poem, Milton, to mark this, stops the whole course of action. The Eternal Father

himself comes down to intervene in the work. It is one of the fine instances of the skill with which the poem is conducted, and, at the same time, as usual, the Fall, the subject of the whole, is reintroduced. There is a pretty touch of reality, when Raphael, describing the return of the Son of God, says that Adam *remembers* how the earth and air resounded then with harmonies, and the book ends with the Sabbath and the Song of Creation.

Book VIII.—The whole of this book is devoted to Man, the central personage of the epic. He is pictured in various relations and with various thoughts; his character is developed, his person painted. In order that our imagination may be filled with him, he tells the tale of his creation, of his joy and innocence, of his early converse with God; of his meeting with and love of Eve; and since we know the conclusion, every touch of beauty and goodness throughout the tale deepens our pity as we look on, and think of the ruin so near at hand. Our pity is further deepened when Adam takes up the converse with Raphael. We find him thirsting for more knowledge, and as in the last book, so here also, we are made to look forward to that desire of forbidden knowledge which was to produce the Fall; we presage it, and our sorrow for the fall begins.

The angel's answer, too discursive for its place, takes us away from the matter of the Epic, but it brings us closely into contact with that personality which at times overweights the poem,—the personality of Milton himself. We see how, even in elder years, the new theories of knowledge were seized by him, how he played with speculation; nor can I doubt that the lines 179–197 are Milton's latest conclusion of what was the true aim, after much pursuit of knowledge, of human intelligence. And the lines—

> "That not to know at large of things remote
> From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the prime wisdom;"

are a curious prophecy of that which the boundless curiosity of the Renaissance was coming to, not only in the new science which followed Milton's time; not only in the resolute study of mankind by the critical school of the poets; but also in that later school which in Wordsworth started from the same ground, but came to a different conclusion.

Adam, after this discourse on knowledge, proposes to tell the tale of his creation, and Raphael is glad to hear it, for he was away at the time, "on excursion toward the gates of Hell." It is a good example of Milton's art. By one slight touch, when the angel describes the dismal gates and the noise within of torment and loud lamenting, the poet recalls and takes care that we shall not lose the first imprint made upon our imagination, and prepares us for the reappearance of Satan. Then Adam begins. The vividness of his first moment of life is finely expressed, but that which is most exquisite is the grace and the temperance of the tale. The notes of innocence, simplicity, and joy are preserved throughout. Adam is not now the reasoner who is sometimes tiresome: he talks like a man who loves the things of which he speaks He is both child and man. And the conversation of God with him has the same tender natural grace. As tenderly wrought and natural is Adam's speech when he asks for a companion Eve seems to throw back her own charm upon the story. God's smile "brightens" it, and the pleasant way in which He draws out and plays with Adam's wish is of that nature that belongs alike to God and Man, and is not unworthy of a father, nor is the verse in which the whole is told less in harmony with the tale, "smooth sliding without step" Then Adam tells of the creation of Eve, which he has seen in vision. As Man has been exalted in our eyes by Milton, so now Woman is lifted into higher place by Adam's description and by his love. We have seen Adam through Eve's eyes; we now see Eve through Adam's. Love fills the verse, and the lines 509-520, which close the tale, are

full of pure and exalted passion. In them Milton, who has kept himself in hand up to this time, never permitting himself to rise beyond one temperate level, lets loose all his poetic power. The softness of the whole is more soft in the close, and all the rapture of its love, and all the rapturous outburst of Nature herself to celebrate the nuptial hour of Adam and Eve, are made more beautiful by the previous temperance of the poet.

We pass from this into another discussion (stirred by Adam's analysis of his passion for Eve) of what passion is, its limits, its rightness, and as to whether the angels are possessed of it. The interest of the dialogue is more personal than poetical. It seems to me that Adam expresses what Milton thought of passion when he was younger, and that Raphael expresses what Milton thought of it when he was old, or perhaps that both express a discussion that always went on in Milton's mind; and I am confirmed in this by the allusion in the line 591 to Petrarca's "scala amoris" and his theory, founded on Plato, as to the final cause of love, a theory which took possession of Milton's mind when he was at Cambridge.

The discussion is not, however, introduced without a poetic reason. It bears on the temptation. As in the beginning of the book the passion for knowledge is touched on, and we presage it as the cause of the fall of Eve, so here the passion in love is touched on, for Milton makes it the cause of the fall of Adam. He perishes "through vehemence of love" for Eve. When Raphael says "take heed lest passion sway thy judgment,"—we look forward to Adam's fall, and when the Angel leaves the earth we prophesy the mischief wrought in Eve by curiosity and in Adam by passion. All has been made ready for the work of the ninth book.

Book IX. brings us to the third and last part of the poem. The episodes are at an end; we return to the subject. All has been told, all the threads taken up and traced back. Nothing has been

left undone, untouched, unmotived. We reach the catastrophe so long prepared for, so long expected. Satan and Mankind are brought face to face, and the ruin is wrought; and Milton marks that this book is the crisis of his poem by referring in the introduction to the crisis of the *Iliad* and of the *Æneid*. And he brings all his powers to bear upon the tale and gathers into his representation of Adam and Eve and Satan all that is chief in their aspect and their characters. The force of Milton's intellect, his analysis of motives and of character, his power of representing the passions, and especially love, what dramatic turn he had, what pathos he had, his natural [illegible] books, there are very few passages which even Landor[1] would think redundant. It is a stern and mighty piece of work.

The importance of the book may be said to call for the introduction, and the personal allusions in it are pathetic and interesting. The true book begins at line 49, when Satan, who has followed the shadow of the earth for seven nights, rises like a mist into Paradise. His speech still further develops his character; but the main point is that it fixes our minds on Man, on all Creation summed up in Man, on Man as made with care by God, as served by angels. That is Milton's aim, for we have now come to the crisis of Man's fate.

Satan creeping like a black mist through Paradise, till he enters the serpent, fills the imagination with dim dismay, and serves to heighten the brightness and charm of the morning scene that follows when Adam and Eve awaken. And Milton, to increase

[1] See the two *Imaginary Conversations*, "Southey and Landor," pp. 57-154, vol. ii. Works of W. S. Landor, Moxon's ed. 1846. They are well worth reading.

the pity in our soul, and to intensify the tragic horror of the ruin, paints one more picture of these two, in their charm and innocence among the untainted flowers, in simple work, and lovely love, and in that delight of love and interchange of thought that often stayed their labour, while they worked together. On this he builds the simple motive of their separation, for Eve thinks that they should divide their daily toil. The proposal and its answer lead Milton easily to develop more fully the characters of Adam and Eve, and at the same time to increase our expectation of the Fall, for Adam refuses Eve's request through fear of the temptation which impends. Adam's dread and Eve's innocent boldness alike, from different points, increase our pity, and the play of thought between them, if that can be called play which, in this part at least becomes at times prosaic, touched with Adam's lordly domesticity, still more prepares us for the yielding of Eve to the tempter. In her last speech but one, 322–341, she loses the tone of sinlessness which Milton has so wonderfully as yet preserved—it is one of the wonders of his work —and is even petulant. She leaves Adam's side; and Milton makes his last and loveliest picture of her innocence veiled in a cloud of fragrance among the glowing roses; nor can he here refrain from painting again the beauty of Paradise. Her loveliness is heightened when we see her through the eyes of Satan, and find him lured by it away from evil; and the simile of her, one in which Milton may have described some quiet farm near Horton, with its indwelling maiden, is the homeliest and the most English in the whole of his work, 445–455.

The wavering of Satan, his half repentance, his fierce resolve, the suggestion, in his glistering and tortuous and slow approach, of the qualities of evil, the first address to Eve, are done with Milton's astonishing power, and we enter now on that discourse of temptation between Satan and Eve, in which, I think, more than in any part of the poem,

save in the council of Hell, the force of Milton's intellect is most supreme; yet it is intellect in subjection to the rule of imagination. Great as it is, the art is greater, and the phrase "So glozed the tempter, and his proem tuned," makes it plain that Milton meant this to be a careful piece of work. The serpent begins with praise of her beauty. "Only one to see thee! Goddess." Eve's vanity is touched, but she expresses it as wonder and curiosity as to how he came to speak. The "spirited sly snake" tells his story, doubling her

hurried,—Where is this tree? An abrupt description of

Not eat! cries the serpent, yet lords of earth and air; and then when Eve says, We shall die—collects himself in act and motion like an orator to speak. The simile of the orator weakens the action of the dialogue. We are taken too far away. Even here Milton could not avoid his fault of digression, and Athens and Rome are, with a certain incongruity, brought into Paradise. But the *semblance* of passion in the speech of Satan, and the rhetorical beginning

scarcely be wrong, and may have unconsciously represented Satan as borne away out of cool argument into passion against God, and into that passion of envy which was closest to his heart. Eve still pauses; Satan's words find their way; her eye is lured to the fruit; it is also her hour of food—for Milton heaps up his

motives—and she muses in a soliloquy. She poises the arguments to and fro, appetite and curiosity underneath. There is no moral struggle of feeling. That and its passions could only be after fall, and Milton has striven throughout to keep them apart from his representation of Adam and Eve. The intellectualism of the talk of Paradise, and its occasional coolness and want of interest is owing to this. Milton has been shut out up to this time from all the vaster tragedy of man, and shut out by the necessity of being true to his subject. The whole of Eve's soliloquy, with the one exception of her praise of the serpent for his want of envy, which is a slip of Milton's, is purely a discourse of intellect. She eats—Nature sighs through all her works; she eats greedily, wishing for knowledge and Godhead; but Milton marks appetite as the thing for which she most cares. Her first thoughts after the fatal tasting are those of an intellect quickened into subtilty by evil. The tree becomes her god, dieted wherewith she will be as the gods. Bolder grown, she thinks the gods will envy her, for she has won that which was not in their power to give; they envy tha they cannot give, and could they have given the gift, the tree had not been there. She separates God, that is, from His creation. She exults in he wisdom, though it is secret, and the word catching he thought, she thinks she herself may be secret; and a she has doubted God's omnipotence, doubts now hi omniscience, and passes from doubt into the ver temper of the Tempter. Satan himself might hav said—

> "Other care perhaps
> May have diverted from continual watch
> Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
> About him."

Then she slips into womanhood; only, in he womanliness, her love is tainted with selfishness She asks, how she will appear to Adam? Sha she keep the odds of knowledge to draw hi love, or render her more equal, or superior—

thing not undesirable But should God have seen, and death touch her, and Adam have another Eve; it is "a death to think." And jealousy decides her to make Adam share her fate. She loves him too well to live or die without him. The force of Milton's work is now a little lessened, but rightly, for the main crisis

the innocent thoughts and love of Adam, and makes his tender picture of Adam, carrying like a child a garland for Eve's hair. Hurried, she breaks into the tale, and

> "From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
> Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed."

Then follows Milton's wonderful picture of passion in its weakness. Adam's love is at first mixed with

ghastly blank of the future—it cannot be! At last he

"The thing is done; who can recall it? The serpent lives, so may we: and is wise, and we too may be wise, wise as gods. And God will scarce destroy his prime creation, nay, all creation, for all will perish with us; and He will be loth to do that, for so the adversary will triumph"—arguments all natural if he had sinned; but he had not Yet Milton's meaning is clear—Adam has sinned already, in the weakness of passion he had already eaten, for he closes with a kind of scorn for all his reasoning "However, I with thee have fixed my lot"

Eve's answer is superfluous, it repeats and more weakly the previous motives; the

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... which heightens their force, are finer in their ghastliness than even the celebrated passage that describes Death in the Second Book. Nor is the power less, when Milton tells in magnificent verse the making of the causeway between Hell and the round of the world. Nothing can be greater than the image of these two ghastly forms ranging Chaos, and beating

into a shoal the solid and the dry, bound with Death's petrific mace into fastness, wrought into a mole immense; though one cannot but wish that Xerxes and his bridge were removed from the description. At last, Death and Sin see, how vividly! Satan "in likeness of an angel bright, Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering." Satan's speech is weighty with scorn and power and cruel joy. There is true devilry in the phrase, "Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill."

Milton's imagination fills their departure with ter- e whole Heavens are blasted as they pass, 4. Nor is Satan's journey to Hell less instinct agination: we hear the very roar of Chaos on the bridge as he descends: and the of him as he goes disguised through empty d suddenly opens forth on his throne from to visible, is in Milton's mightiest manner. enetrative imagination" that makes Satan now his old magnificence in aspect and in speech. s together his image at the beginning and ge at the end, and a full picture of him with us. It is natural also that he should here; he had reached his aim. But it is heighten the catastrophe. Scorn he has nd brought shame on man, and scorn and are his at the moment of his greatest pride. nges to a monstrous serpent, and all his s change with him. This is the last, the com- ll of Satan. We hear of him no more; the f the Fall is wrought in him, and we leave, nd shamed and tortured, in utter degradation, om some have strangely termed the true hero *dise Lost.*

istory of the result of the Fall is now continued ction of Sin and Death in Paradise, and when heir fierce talk, says—"Till I in man residing the race,"—she strikes one of the key-notes ollowing books. It is the race, and the effects of e race, that dwell through all the talk of Adam

and Eve, and through the vision Michael shows to Adam, and through the talk of the Father and the Son. It is not Adam only that Milton now sees. It is Adam as all mankind.

The next result is a sorrowful change in Nature.

on me. Did I ask God to make me?" Yet, as he

may not be at one stroke, but the perpetuity of misery such as I have now? Death eternal and I eternal, and my death eternal in my race, cursed and corrupt through me—me utterly miserable and lost!—'from deep to deeper plunged' On me, me only, let the curse fall." All night long he mourns, and calls on death; and the closing lines, 860–62, are full of Milton's lovely tenderness, exquisite in Adam's reference to outward nature after all this inward passion of thought and pain.

In this, his Purification, at which Milton works throughout, has now begun. Adam confesses the justice of God, and his desire for death is a desire of self-sacrifice, that he may save his race. One drop of evil clings to him, his bitterness against that "bad woman"; till that is gone he cannot be more purified, nor yet Eve. Therefore Milton, knowing that his epic work was now to ennoble Eve and Adam, makes Eve draw near. Adam's violent speech has been much blamed, but the censors have forgotten how entirely natural it was, nor have they seen the touch in it of love, "that too heavenly form," nor that it is so fierce that love must be there, love cruel

the grave. No woman would hate Adam for it, nor does Eve. The reply is full of beautiful love.

"While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace,"

are words that reach the height of tragic pathos. The strongest thing in her speech, as in Adam's, is her horror that her sin should be visited on the race. When she, like Adam, says, "On me, me only let the curse fall," she also reaches the spirit of sacrifice, and another element enters into her purification: while Adam, in feeling love again fill his heart for Eve, steps into a higher life. Nothing can be more careful than Milton's work in all this part of his subject. Still dwelling on their wish to save their descendants from the results of their fall, Eve, impetuously speaking, proposes to Adam childlessness, or suicide. Adam's love rises higher and he gains admiration of her character. Another poetic necessity is satisfied in this: but his reason, still keeping close to the thought of the race, answers Eve, "If we are childless, the promised seed will not redeem mankind." The spirit of sacrifice in them both now works further results. They think of the promise, of the pity already shown them, and penitence and prayer begin; and the book ends leaving them prostrate where they sinned, "in sorrow unfeigned, humiliation meek."

I have dwelt long on this, because it is a part of Milton's epic work which I do not remember has been much, if at all, treated of. Yet it fills this book and the next; and the conclusion of the whole poem is its conclusion. Had not the purification of the hero, to use the term, been made foremost in these books, there would have been little use for them. Had it not been there, had the poem ended at the Ninth Book with some short conclusion, the complete epic character, supposing mankind, in Adam and Eve, to be the hero, would have, I think, been wanting to the whole poem.

Book XI. carries on the three aims I have men-

tioned, and Man is still the hero, still the central figure. Their "port is not of mean suitors" when they pray; Heaven is still engaged about them; and Milton makes the Son of God say to the Father that their end is to be "made one with me as I with thee."

The discourse of the expulsion takes up the first part of the book, and the ruling note of it is struck —as also of the close of the poem—in the line—

"So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace."

In Paradise the morning has come, and Adam and Eve, softened by penitence, are further purified by Milton. So much of Paradise has already returned that Adam has seen a vision of God, and with it, has felt peace. Then his honour for Eve deepens, for he remembers the promise that she shall be the source of redemption: and Eve herself feels that, having been the Bringer of Death, she is now made the Source of Life. This great idea purifies them. The pathetic contrast which follows between Eve's hopes of pleasant toil, as of old, in Paradise, and nature's contradiction of her hopes, is done with that grand simplicity which is Milton's own in pathos. The picturesque description of the eagle and the lion driving their prey, two birds, a hart and hind—is lifted into the realm of the imagination by the suggestion in it of the coming expulsion; for the prey is driven to the eastern gate. Another vivid contrast follows. In the East, whither the guilty are to go, the sun is darkened at morn, but the west is all ablaze, whence comes Michael, the minister of expulsion. Another of Milton's picturesque methods is used, when he makes our eyes follow through more than ten lines the approach of the archangel through the garden. We know from the force with which Milton paints the angel, how glad he is to do it, but he does not forget that Adam is changed, and Michael comes now, not as an angel, but as a man. The sentence is followed by that pathetic cry of Eve, lovelier and lovelier in its tenderness till the last and loveliest lines. Nor is Adam's answer in its [illegible]

beautiful and tender, though it is made distinct from Eve's speech by the note of manliness. Another element of purification is marked in this reply. The devotion of worship has come, remorse is changed into the memory of love, and that into love itself. Lastly, one of the deepest thoughts of Milton's inner life fills five lines of Michael's answer, 360–65, and then the angel leads Adam to the Mount of Vision.

That Vision is introduced not only to reveal the results of the Fall, but to work out still further the purification of Adam. Milton dwells on this with care 360–65, 370–76. There is too much geographical detail at the beginning, but Milton loved his roll of names, and we may well afford them room. The first picture is of Cain and Abel and the murder. It is short; but Milton's long experience in choosing the right things to describe so as to set the imagination of the reader to create the whole, the exquisite selectiveness of his art is nowhere better shown than in this picture and the third (555–65). The azar-house is not of the same quality; it seems overworked; we know he added to it: and the lines of most interest are those at the close of the discourse on death, in which we seem to read the temper of Milton's sonnet at the age of twenty-three deepened now in his old age.—

> "Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
> Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven."

The picture of the corrupt civilisation which follows the union of the children of Seth and of Cain is Milton's reproduction in history of the spirit of Belial's speech in the Second Book, as the next picture of War and Injustice realises the spirit of Moloch's speech and the next of Evil Peace the spirit of Mammon' speech; and it is worth while to compare the speeche with the pictures. The reigns of luxurious art, violence, and of wealth are all finely wrought, but wi out precise force, as if they were seen by the imaginati not in sight, but in a dream; not in reality, but i

picture. They *are* so seen; but it is just because they are so seen that they lack power. Then follows the vision of the flood, full of fine lines, enough to supply many poets with material; yet the theological commentary of Adam and Michael weakens the effect, and the passage falls below Milton's power. The vision of the rainbow and Adam's joy thereat end the book.

Book XII. closes this eventful history. The Vision ceases; and Michael narrates, in a rapid sketch, the further results of the Fall, and of God's action, [illegible] The promise [illegible] of the greater [illegible] in His sacrifice and a part of the blessings lost at the Fall is redeemed. The history of the Christian Church is then told until the final victory over Satan at the judgment-day, when new heavens and a new earth arise and all that was Lost is Won. It is difficult to say that all this is not necessary. It completes the subject of the vindication of God's ways to man; the canvas is filled not only with man conquered, but with man the conquerour: the whole earth now made new—

> "Shall be one Paradise, far happier place
> Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

But to praise it in comparison with the rest is impossible. The interest is only that of an annalist's tale. It is a pity the poem should pass to its close through this slow and dragging narration, and the political and religious opinions of Milton lower the due dignity of the Archangel's words by introducing too personal and too controversial an element. At the end of it the further purification of Adam is insisted on—557-573, and we are made to understand that this was all important in Milton's eyes by the sayings of Michael—That now Adam had attained the sum of wisdom, better than the knowledge he sought of old from Raphael; the wisdom of obedience and love of God, in contrast with the false knowledge won by diso

from the tree—and, That when deeds answerable to that wisdom are added to it—

> "Then wilt thou not be loth
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A Paradise within thee, happier far."

The same ennobling and purifying power of thought has been with Eve, dreaming in her sleep while Adam saw and heard; and both are in possession of wisdom and inward Paradise, when they leave the Tree of Knowledge and the earthly Paradise behind. It is the true close of the Poem—the epic purification of mankind.

Then comes the last scene: Adam, full of love, runs before the angel to waken Eve; she is ready to go with him, for he is all things to her, all places. The cherubim descend, in front the brandisht sword of God; and through the eastern gate "our lingering parents" disappear. They look back, and see—

> "The gate
> With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms,"

and pass away; and on our minds—all else gone, Satan and Hell, God and Heaven and Paradise and Angels—the image of Mankind alone remains.

The characters of Adam and Eve and Satan are worth separate consideration, and I have kept them for the most part out of my analysis of the conduct of the poem. I could not do so altogether, and a few repetitions are unavoidable.

Adam and Eve.—Adam is our primitive great sire and Eve the mother of mankind. They are not intended in any sense to represent men and women such as we know them, worn with the wars of thought and passion, made complex or dwarfed by civilisation, but the archetypal man and woman, fresh from the hand of God. They are primal,

and all in them is primal. There is nothing in all art which resembles this great outline of Milton, an outline as of early gods, except Michel Angelo's two frescoes in the Sistine Chapel of Adam and of Eve coming into life. These have the same ineffable breath of first humanity by which the Adam and Eve of Milton live. Both the man and the woman are sinless, without sin's complexity and its knowledge; both are free intellectually and morally; both are perfect in health, and have in full degree all the natural passions. In both, Reason and Will are set as lords over their nature; and the reason, the will, and the passions act as Milton supposed them to act in two fresh, simple, and perfect persons who are wholly without experience. Milton has, with extraordinary self-restraint, kept himself within the necessary limits of this subject. When he does not succeed in doing so, the transgression is so remarkable that we are made to realise its rarity. Of course, such limits prevent his delineation from interesting those who care only for the agony or joy of the human struggle as it is seen in Œdipus, or Hamlet, or Faust, or for the storm of human action as seen in Achilles or Æneas; but if we can leave these more exciting phases of human life aside for a little, it may give us pleasure at last to look on Milton's first man and first woman while as yet their humanity had neither agony nor action.

They were then made lords of all, the image of their glorious Maker, having truth, wisdom, "sanctitude severe and pure," and placed in freedom. Adam is formed for contemplation (intellectual strength of reason), for valour (manly strength with tenderness). Both these are the grounds of that absolute rule which [illegible] highest relation is not to her, but to God; and strength, and reason, and love are to be held in subjection to God's will, because that will is goodness. Obedience is then his first and [illegible]

It includes all others. That is Milton's conception of absolute Manhood. In the Fall, the vehemence of passionate love overthrows obedience to God, and reason, and strength.

Eve is formed for softness and sweet attractive grace; perfect in beauty, that from "about her shot darts of desire;" as keen to desire all things as fit to awake desire: subject to the man as he to God; but her subjection "demanding gentleness," and "yielded with coy submission, modest pride;" full of love, but love given "with sweet reluctant amorous delay." As deep as reason is in Adam, so deep is curiosity in Eve. This in Milton's absolute Womanhood. Finally the vehemence of curiosity overthrows, at the Fall, love, and subjection to man, and obedience to God.

In Adam's very first speech—iv. 410—he reasons through his own state and his duties to God, but he begins it with his love to Eve. Eve, answering, doe not reason at all. She looks to Adam as he to Go declares her relation to him and then glides at on into womanhood, the pure primal womanhood Milton saw it; which delighted to recall the first d of her life, dwelling on its details one by one; wh loved the charm of the past, and to paint it a picture; which records a touch of happy and i cent vanity, lost at once, when she is wooed yielding and delighted love. In neither of the there a single trace of the wilder passions o soul which arise from unregulated sense or fro regulated questioning. Both are kept quite and natural. Their love is tender and intellige it is also passionate. Pure sensuousness and de bodily passion are made by Milton to belong very essence of their love. It is a marvel hov kept it free, and large, and pure, yet left it s But there is a difference in their love. Ev womanhood, plays round her love, and and makes it complex—but her love is neve dam's love has intensity; he only sees Ev of love with flowers, and

her loveliest outbursts (iv. 639) she, looking far more deeply than Adam ever does into the beauty of the outward world, brings all nature and all its life from morn till night before her hearer, that she may illustrate and enhance her love; nor does Milton fail to mark her soft attractive grace in the sweetness of his verse.

Adam, in his answer, loves this quality in Eve —"Daughter of man and God, accomplisht Eve," but himself delights more to speak of the causes of things and their use. The speech of both when this first talk is closed is worthy of these two sinless figures. They are happy in God and one another, but they are also happy, and this is one of the ground tones of their characters, in their hope of a plenteous race to issue from their love. On the foundation of this thought Milton builds another description of their passionate love.

At their next awaking in the Fifth Book it is still love which fills the scene, still the grace of Eve's beauty, still the delight of desire in Adam. His call to her to waken is the pure call of healthy and passionate joy, and in its innocent pleasure in the day and the work of the day seems childish till we begin to feel its large simplicity The dream that Eve tells is meant to show some of the roots of her character, those where she is weakest In it her love of beauty is placed even before her curiosity of appetite and of the unknown. That love of nature, so strong in her, is touched; that love of her own beauty, which, still innocent, was not yet vanity, is also touched here, as it is in her first account of herself. The love of power which Milton held to be inherent in woman, the desire of the forbidden, the stirring of appetite through beauty, are all made prominent Yet Eve is saved

oth reason and love are almost in e...
Vere it not for his love, his discursiveness would
dull ; were it not for the reason in him, his love would
be weak. After this talk they are both lifted out of criticism by their splendid Psalm of Praise. It adds to the great impression of this primitive man and woman that they should both have, as native gifts, the power of rapture and the power of eloquence.

In the association with Raphael their characters are further developed. Eve loves to put things into form ; she is taken up with the pleasure of hospitality, of making things bright and ready, of giving happiness. We see that her gardening is her joy, that she treats the flowers like children, and delights in seeing them also grow and shape themselves at her will. She loves to feel in this way her power. Adam, on the contrary, is all astir within his brain. No sooner is the meal over, than he will not let the occasion pass to know things above the world ; he would, in contemplation of created things, by steps ascend to God. He cannot rest for the "thirst he has of knowledge," and when he knows, he reasons, argues, speculates, entering on "studious thoughts abstruse," on quaint speculations finally as to whether the angels loved. Withal he does not lose courtesy, a noble patriarchal courtesy, and out of it grows one of the few speeches in which Adam is made to have a poetic turn on any subject save a lofty one (vii. 98–108).

Meanwhile Eve, delighted with the story of the War and the Creation, moves away when the conversation turns to scientific matters. It is not, Milton is anxious to say, that she is not capable of understanding these things, but that she reserved that pleasure.

> "Her husband the relater she preferred
> Before the angel, and of him to ask
> Chose rather ; he, she knew, would intermix
> Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
> With conjugal caresses : from his lip
> Not words alone pleased her."—Bk. viii. 50.

It is primæval womanhood, and the picture is worthy of the first woman, when in lowliness majestic she rose from her seat, and with "Grace that won who saw to wish her stay," went among her fruits and flowers—

> "With [illegible]

Over against this stately and noble beauty, the home of desire [illegible]
the [illegible]
inte[illegible]
it pleases him (VIII. 185, &c.), but is always master of it to bring it home to the uses of daily life. Afterwards, in contrast to the picture Eve has made in the fourth book of her coming into life is set the picture of the coming into life of Man, when Adam, loving his social talk, delays the angel to tell the story of his own creation. I can never read it (Bk. VIII. 250, &c.) without wonder and joy at anything so great and fine, without reverence for the character which conceived it. It is the true picture of absolute, first manhood, if we think of it as made at once out of God. The physical man is first touched, and we see him laid in balmy sweat, just born to life. His eyes are fixed on heaven; he springs to his feet; he sees all things—not their beauty, as Eve saw, but their life—and at the sight, and at himself—Joy, first of all the passions, springs into being. He peruses himself; tries his powers, walking, running; tries speech; finds it and intelligence; names all things; breaks into a burst of delight; then reasons at once from creation to a God. Who is God? is his first question. Why do I live, why so happy? is his second. Then comes pensiveness, the first forerunner of the sense of loneliness, and he falls to sleep. Who else but Milton could have done that? Not Shakspere, his soul was too involved with the

trouble and doubt of the world. I wonder if any one but a blind man could have done it.

Appetite then arises, Adam eats and wakes: and swift following is that charming scene, the first longing of native love for its mate, the first stirring of vague desire, the first loneliness of man's heart, the root of that love which is the deepest thing in Adam's character. And God, here alone in *Paradise Lost*, seen in the solemn human beauty which we can love, gives him his desire:—

> "And the Vision bright,
> As with a smile more brightened, thus replied."

And when Adam presses for a companion, answers—

> "A nice and subtle happiness I see
> Thou to thyself proposest."

No one but Milton could have touched this scene. It plays with the Highest, but does not lower Him. And the strange humour of the dialogue is full of grave loveliness, and of the grandeur of God and the first Man, till we come to the last and loveliest lines—

> "What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
> Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
> Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire."

All the first thoughts, all the primal desires of a man are sketched in this scene. Nor is the art less which makes Adam only long to fill his loneliness, which gives him only a vague want. It is differen when he sees the woman, 470, &c. Then vagu desire realises what it means; passion is born, th passion of which Adam speaks till the close of th book, on which Milton insists as the conqueror reason, as the point where Adam alone was we In the midst of this wonderful sketch, Milton, Adam's voice, draws his intensest picture of Eve the "eternal feminine," as Goethe would call it. is a curious touch that while Adam confesses the w ness of his nature under passion, he reasons on if it were something outside of himself. In A

reason acts separately from passion. Even when he is swept away by passion, his reason keeps its clearness while it abdicates. It is the opposite in Eve.

When we next meet them, Eve wishes to leave Adam, in order to divide their work. Her character already begins to lose simplicity. Milton certainly means to suggest in the womanhood he here draws a desire of some change, a vague weariness and impatience of the continuous everyday order of life. It is a part of Eve's deep curiosity which here appears. Unconsciously deceiving herself, she feels and represents her dim weariness of life as desire to do the work of the garden better by dividing it. Adam is acute enough to see this; if he did not we should think less of his intelligence. Bk. ix. 247, 8. Then Milton paints the woman's self-confidence; her readiness to go and meet temptation, the readiness of unreasoning daring; the woman's common laughter at the man's prudence and fear. It is otherwise with Adam. He does fear, he reasons about love; really loves more than Eve; begs her, and warns her, to stay, but when she reproaches him in the woman's way for mistrust, excuses himself, cannot stand her frown, argues, but yields at last. She has her fancy; she will have it; she can think of nothing else; opposition only fixes her.

In her talk with Satan Milton emphasises her yielding to the persuasion of the new and strange "Into the heart of Eve his words made way," because she was so wonderstruck and so pleased to wonder Her child-like vanity, her woman's love of power, are now no longer innocent Satan calls her empress, sovran of creatures, goddess among gods,—and then, when she yields, all her qualities rush into their extremes. Appetite becomes sensual, curiosity becomes diseased desire, the desire of having her own way sets her into rebellious contempt. God's forbidding commends the fruit more, infers its good and their want The whole of her argument is nothing more than—"I wish it."

And when she has taken the fruit she knows no restraint, there is no vision of anything but self; mean—she is wholly in her sin, all thought is lost, all not of God, nor of Adam, only of satiated joy; until the thought of another Eve by the side of Adam makes her sick with jealousy. When she returns to Adam, she has the boldness of the woman who, having done wrong, and while the excitement of wrong continues, glories in her sin. She appeals to the man to do wrong also, and to his weakest point—Sin now, because you love me. As to Adam, he is represented as absolutely in her power through passion. Resistance drops into dismay, and dismay rises out of itself into passion. Then manhood comes in. Having once resolved to give way to passion even in sin—he becomes calm, and reasons on the whole question.

But he reasons differently from Eve. She has no fear; Adam has. Eve in the pleasure of curiosity and excitement does not and did not look forward. Adam thinks of, and dreads the future; but his love is more than his dread. Not surprised, but with his eyes wide open, he sins; not deceived, but fondly overcome. And then, the pure passion of their lives changes to impure, and the Fall is complete. True criticism will recognise that the whole of this, *given the conditions*, is as fine, in its grave, though slow-moving manner, as anything in Shakspere.

After the fall there is a languor in the characterisation of Adam and Eve. Milton had so long considered them and built them up the foundation of innocence, that when he has to alter that foundation altogether, he is troubled, and so troubled as to become languid. It is a want of dramatic inventiveness, one of Milton's greatest wants. The evil now added t[o] their characters does not make them, as it woul[d] naturally do, more complex. They remain simple, an[d] the evil is rather their clothing than of themselv[es]. We might easily make this into a reason for prai[se] and declare that Milton kept them simple on purpo[se]

because evil was so new to them. But that would be over-subtle and untrue. He is right in keeping the grand lines of their primal nature, but he was perhaps unable to bring in the other elements. One thing alone is added to their characters—pathetic power, and it is nobly added.

The change itself and the purification of their characters through repentance I have already dwelt on. Adam is the first to repent, the first to act, the first to reproach. He knows his moral state, and he knows its end; Eve only knows it through Adam. The recrimination which follows, Bk. ix. 1135, &c., is neither of Adam nor of Eve specially. It is of essential human nature; it is the simple ordinary dull result of mutual guilt which is here represented. A touch in Adam's outburst against Eve in the next book angrily exaggerates one of the ground tones of Milton's character of Eve—"longing to be seen—even by the Devil himself."

Eve still remains the most interesting; she is always more complex than Adam. Adam is, as before, made up of the pure reason and of love to Eve; and he sees things and their true relations even more clearly than before the Fall, because passion, having suffered from itself, does not now master reason. This point Milton has clearly marked, but it is different with Eve. Sin has made Adam less but Eve more passionate. Having suffered, she feels everything more keenly than she did before she was guilty, she reasons less, and sees things less plainly; but she loves more. She has gained intensity. The passionate way of looking at life, not hers before, now makes her feelings lead her where they will. As she lightly dared temptation before fall, so now she resolutely dares the whole punishment. "Let all the sentence light on me!" Adam's anger breaks down at once under his love. Then his reason comes in. "Unwary and too desirous, as before"—to think you could bear all the punishment —ill-able to bear thine own. Nor can prayers alter decrees!—Eve, led by passionate desire for the rescue

of the race from the curse, rushes into extremes. Let us be childless—let us give ourselves death! Adam's strong intellect sees her proposals as folly, though he respects the feeling at their root.

The whole difference between them is subtly marked. When Adam fell, his reason, though mastered, retained its clearness; he yields to passion, but he knows he is acting irrationally. But in Eve, passionate feeling now that she has it, is the reason of her will. Her whole body too alters under her intense realisation of her emotion—

> "So much of death her thoughts
> Had entertained as dyed her cheek with pale."

The end is very lovely and full of womanhood. Once Eve is reconciled to Adam, she thinks that all is well. She forgets the sentence and returns to her work, content. When she is forgiven she forgives herself, and sees her life as good. When she hears that she may not remain in Paradise, all the woman's tender clinging to home and the life she loved breaks out in her pathetic cry. Adam feels the same sorrow, but his reason sees the impossibility of staying, and he turns to rest in God. Last, after the Vision—the love of both for one another is alone left for us to think of. Adam hurries before the angel to wake his beloved. Eve welcomes him as all things under heaven to her, yet, always more complex than Adam, thinks also of motherhood and of the salvation of the race through her seed. It is the last womanly touch. And Milton sends them forth hand in hand, happy in their love.

The Character of Milton's Satan.—He has been often said to be the hero of *Paradise Lost*. It is enough to say, in answer, that his history in that book is that of a person in process of degrading change. Adam, the true hero of the epic, and with him Eve, are purified at the end. That which they have lost they regain in another form—"a Paradise within thee, happier far." Over against this purification is set the

degradation of Satan; and his real fall is all the greater for his apparent victory.

But at first he is not absolutely evil. There was an epic necessity that he should be sublime, and that we should be interested in him, and absolute evil is mean, and wakes no pleasure. Therefore he is made a mixed character, with evil passions in which good still lingers. And these are held in one who has genius and all its charm—great beauty, great intellect, great emotions, great physical daring; in all things proudly eminent. The evil finally masters the good, but the good is made vivid and attractive by

a number of points the Satan of Milton resembles the Napoleon of history.

At the beginning Satan is then a mixed character. Before he falls, as I maintain a second time in his destruction of innocent beings, he is selfish, but with abrupt touches of unselfishness. He is proud, but his pride is for others as well as for himself. He is full of envy and malice, yet he often hates these passions in himself. He destroys, but it is with difficulty he overcomes his pity for those he destroys. He is the great rebel against goodness, but he persuades himself it is for the sake of freedom. He brings war into heaven, and despises heaven, yet he loves its beauty and would fain thither return. He is God's enemy, yet he allows God's justice. He revenges himself, yet revenge is bitter. He is ruthless in his sacrifice of his comrades to his egotism, but he so does it as to win the honour and retain the love of those he sacrifices He hates man, but he loves his friend. He hates God, but at first his hatred is not mean; it is carried out with indomitable will and courage, not to be subdued by pain. He ruins beauty, but he regrets its loss in himself and admires it in others. He lets loose Hell, and Sin, and

arth, but in the doing of it he is sorry. It is the
nixed human character in which goodness is, but in
which evil predominates. It only ceases to be human
at the very end, when evil has driven out all good.
It is this humanity that makes him the most interest-
ing character in *Paradise Lost* to those who do not
read the poem to the close.

The Physical Presentation.—He is master of
all the fallen angels in Power; above them all shone
the archangel—and we admire the power, for at first
it is made use of not only for selfish and brutal ends.
It is controlled by intellect; adapted to carry out
conceptions and to rescue his followers; bound up
with courage and labour for others. The whole pas-
sage in which his flight over chaos is resolved on
and described illustrates this element of good in his
power. Again, in the garden, he claims, before
putting forth his might in battle with Gabriel, to have
used his strength for the sake of his people, and the
splendid picture of his physical greatness (iv. 985)
accords with his thoughts. It is impossible to con-
nect that sublime apparition with the foul image of
absolute evil.

Yet the evil errand and the evil in him have already
lessened his might. Zephon and Gabriel both tel
him that because he is wicked he is weak. Lower an
lower, as the poem goes on, his physical power sinks,
in exact proportion to the growth of evil in him.
When he comes to use it, not for others but only for
destroying happiness, it drops to deeper weakness.
Milton marks the point. Satan fears Adam as possibly
stronger than he—he who had met archangels. Satan
fears pain—he who, so strong was passion, did not
feel the burning marl. Adam is—

> "Foe not informidable! exempt from wound,
> I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
> Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven."

This is the degradation of physical power.

The Degradation of Physical Beauty also comes upon
him, and it is the dying of the remnants of good which

steals away his splendour. Once that splendour was only less than archangel ruined—his form had "not lost all her original brightness." Step by step it falls away. When he meets Uriel in the sun, he can still take the likeness of a stripling cherub. But even this form is ruined when, on Mount Niphates, his borrowed face is dimmed,

> "Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy and despair."

Later on, when he meets in Paradise Zephon and Ithuriel and asks, in pride, if they know him not—Think not, they answer,

> "Revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
> Or undiminisht brightness
> Thou resemblest now
> Thy sin, and place of doom obscure and foul."

And bitter is Satan's grief. He saw and pined

> "His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
> His lustre visibly impaired."

[illegible]

him. When he enters hell on his return, his shape is still starbright, but the shining is now "false glitter," and then—at the very hour when he would be most glorious—Milton, to mark the end of beauty which has ceased to be the expression of any goodness, since it has destroyed goodness, turns him into the hideous dragon—"a monstrous serpent on his belly prone." This is the degradation of beauty

The Intellectual Presentation.—He is easily master of the rest in intellect. The dash and vigour with which he answers Abdiel's argument (Book V) that submission is due to God because He is their maker, is admirable, and Abdiel does not argue in return. He denounces Satan as a blasphemer. But the blasphemy is intellectual, and does not fall below a certain grand style of thought and expression. Milton marks that it is instinct with sophistry, with

counterfeited truth, and the results it produces in Satan are fatalism (855), and the scorn which fills his speeches in the battle. But at first the addition of evil to his character quickens his intellect beyond that of the good angels. It is, however, as a tree is quickened by a poisonous element added to its soil which forces its life, and then hastens its decay. That was Milton's idea. He makes the same thing take place in Eve after she has eaten of the fruit. Her whole nature is stimulated—senses, appetite, and intellect. Both she and Adam feel "divinity within them breeding wings." But the result is only the lower cunning of the intellect (Bk. ix. 810, &c.). Milton's notion then is that intellectual power, at first quickened by evil, degenerates into subtlety and then into base cunning. And he works this out in a masterly ay. (In the first great speeches of the fallen Archngel and in all that leads to them; in the rapidity with which he conceives his plan, and provides for its acceptance by the council; in the majestic rhetoric and persuasion with which he binds all round him, Satan's intellect is supreme. It confesses but despises agony. And this intellectual force, in itself admirable, is kept so, because it is used, as his power was, for the succour of those he has ruined. But as evil deepens in him towards the ruin of man for the sake only of revenge, he loses breadth of intellect. He is wholly different in the garden from the great Intelli gence he was in hell. The degradation is slow; for s far good clings to him that he cannot destroy withou regret. Not till he has beaten back all the remna of noble thoughts that urge him to pity, and fu resolves on using his intellect to destroy innocen does he feel the loss of intellect. When he d Milton again marks the point clearly. Satan is af to tempt Adam, lest he should be too clear-he for him. Behold alone, he says—

> "The woman, opportune to all attempts,
> Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
> Whose higher intellectual more I shun."

This is the degradation of intellect, and it is subtly continued in the speech made in hell, before Satan is made into a serpent. Compare its boasting, its weak and scornful note with the majesty of the first speeches. The archangel mind is gone. Nothing is now left but the serpent's cunning.

The Moral Presentation of Satan is built on the same lines, and passes through similar changes. In Book V. the root of his evil is exposed. When the Son of God is made vicegerent of Heaven, Satan, fraught with envy, could not bear

> "Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.
> Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain."

Pride, out of intense self-desire, is that evil out of which Milton makes all other evils rise. "We are eclipsed," Satan says, we, "ordained to govern, not to serve." And the same fierce note of "high disdain from sense of injured merit" is struck at once in the first speech in hell and in every speech in Book I. Out of it flow naturally "the study of revenge, immortal hate;" the scorn of repentance, and finally its impossibility. Not once, through the poem, does Milton let slip this pride. Whenever Satan is touched towards sorrow, whenever he seems *near penitence; it is this and the shame of being* lower than his own thought of himself, of being faithless to his vow of vengeance for the slight he has suffered, which recall him to his evil work. It ends, [illegible] produc- [illegible] of envy, [illegible] ose who have not wronged him

At first the solitary grandeur of his pride, needing no help and asking none, makes him for a time sublime, lifts him above pain, above ruin, and gives him a grave consolation in despair All is not lost, the unconquerable will remains unbroken The same disdain that made him great to rebel makes him great to resist his fate. Yet even here, at his

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highest moment, Milton marks the weakness in this, by making Satan boast too much. Nor is this pride at first entirely evil, for it is not for himself alone. It is a mixed egotism. In Heaven before the war, it is pride for his class, or seems so; indignant that the angels should be under any government not chosen by themselves, indignant afterwards that they should serve man. And it is not only pride for the honour of his class, but pride in the courage, faithfulness, and glory, though withered, of his followers. In the great passage, Bk. i. 600, in which he speaks of this, he so far loses self in his emotion as to break into tears; made to touch at that moment the least selfish instant of his life. With those tears passed away the last traces of his archangel life and they are, even to the fact that the tears came partly out of the sensitiveness of genius to the excitement of a vast crowd of followers moved with love, strangely paralleled by the tears of the Emperour at Fontainebleau. In this hour Satan's solitude of pride is modified towards good by his sympathy with his followers. But the natural isolation of pride carries *him away from this touch of good, and produces* scorn; and the scorn suffers the same degradation that affects the pride.

Satan's scorn in the battle in Heaven is poor, but at least it is daring. His scorn in Bk. i. is the lofty scorn of pain, and of his victorious foe, and it is sympathetic with his followers. His scorn in Bk. ii has lost its loftiness and its sympathy. There is a touch of contempt for his people in all he says. He thinks them well ruined for his sake. Step by step the scorn loses its remnant of nobleness, and in the last speech of all it has fallen into the mindless scoff of a degraded trickster. When Satan says he has seduced man—

> "And the more to increase
> Your wonder, with an apple; he (God) thereat
> Offended, worth your laughter," &c,

his scoff is lower than himself: Milton could have made

it as noble as he liked. He made it, and purposely, unworthy of Satan's previous lofty tone. His object is to mark at all points the degradation of Satan after he has used his powers for the destruction of innocence.

Satan's pride—to which I return—continues to work within him, and isolates him from his followers. In Bk. ii. he refuses service from others lest service should entail equality. "Whole in himself and owed to none," he goes upon his journey: it is a step downwards from the pride which could weep for sympathy. But the degradation is again slowly wrought. When he is alone and none can see his sorrow, his pride breaks down again and again, and as often reasserts itself.

The struggle in which he becomes wholly evil goes through several phases. The first is on Mount Niphates. The excitement of the scenes in Hell is over. The look he fixes on the sun is "sad and grieved." His speech begins in sighs. It is the image of one in whom pride for the moment has given way to the consciousness of misery and of hell within: in whom there is some good. Conscience is alive, but it wakes despair; and he bursts out, like Prometheus, racked too like him, in an address to the sun. The bright Light recalls to him his ancient brightness, and for that he hates it. Yet there is softness in his hate, it is the hate of tears. Self-pity thrills him through. And in the softening he thinks of God, and for a moment breaks into penitence—a strange touch in Milton's conception of Satan which is repeated in *Paradise Regained*:—

> "Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
> Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King:
> Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
> From me, whom he created what I was
> In that bright eminence, and with his good
> Upbraided none, nor was his service hard."—Bk. iv. 40

pride. Had he been an inferior angel, he had been

now happy, since without ambition. Yet, no! he had free will to fall or not, and in any state—such was his temper—he had fallen. Therefore he has nothing to accuse but Heaven's free love dealt equally to all—"Be then God's love accurst!"—a fine, fierce turn of his despair and hate. And the self-consciousness of this awful temper of mind in him which makes him curse love, overthrows his self-control; and the depth of his wretchedness is unveiled:—

> "Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath and infinite despair?" &c.

The passion of this sorrow leads him to ask if he can repent. Then his pride comes back. No—he thinks, disdain forbids repentance, dread of shame among the spirits beneath, who little know—and here again pride in its lonely hour yields to pain—under what torments he groans, how dearly he abides his boasting! Yet were he to repent—(and it is wise of Milton to make Satan know himself so well; the deceiver is not self-deceived)—he could not remain submissive. He would be filled again with disdain, and now "wounds of deadly hate have pierced too deep." It may not be; God knows him as he knows himself. God would not grant a useless peace, neither can he beg it—

> "So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
> Farewell remorse: All good to me is lost;
> Evil, be thou my good: by thee at least
> Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold."

This is the first struggle of the remnants of good with self-degrading pride.

The next is when he sees Adam and Eve (Bk. iv. 358). Envy seizes him, but the old heavenly delight in beauty and goodness glides into his soul. He wonders at their loveliness; he could love them, so lively shines in them divine resemblance. Pity follows the passing breath of love:—

> "Ah gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
> Your change approaches. . . . . . .
> To you whom I could pity thus forlorn,
> Though I unpitied."

But his resolution holds firm; and the touch of heaven only serves to give the irony with which he opens Hell to them a subtle note of regret and pathos. The emotion in his irony influences him through his sensitive nature (and at first Satan is represented as highly strung to all fine things and answering instantly to them), and his pity rises again. He is loth to this revenge, yet public reason compels him— It is not public reason: it is his own pride that drives him to action, and with it also

> "Honour and empire with revenge enlarged."

Milton marks the conscious self-deceit. Satan's public reason is that necessity which is "the tyrant's plea." This is the second struggle, and its evil result is shown at line 505, where all pity is gone and only envy left.

If anything were wanting to confirm his resolve, it is now given by Milton when Satan is discovered and led before Gabriel and all the old wounds are re-opened. The scene is filled throughout with touches which insist on pride. "Not to know me argues yourselves unknown" has almost passed into a *proverb* of *pride*: [illegible] defiance lowers in [illegible] the very bitterness [illegible] angel;" its isolation in

> "I therefore, I alone first undertook
> To wing the desolate abyss;"

its boasting in his scorn of "cringing" angels.

Gabriel's answer looks forward to that which pride was sure to make Satan in the end. He is in the archangel's eyes the sly hypocrite. Gabriel dwells on hypocrisy, and it is a subtle thought, as being, even in Heaven, the result of pride—

> "Who more than thou
> Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored?"

And the speech makes us see plainly that those who strangely claim Satan as the representative [illegible]

cratic liberty are wholly mistaken: for Milton marks another point in Satan considered as the representative tyrant, that "he would *seem* the patron of liberty."

Seven nights pass by between this and Satan's next appearance. Out of the lonely brooding of their darkness he comes back to Paradise, resolved to destroy. The third phase of his struggle has come, but it is scarcely now a struggle. He sees the earth and all its beauty—Bk. ix. 100—and thinks with what delight he would have walked it round; but beauty does not soften him as before, it torments him by contrast with the inward pain he suffers, "as from the hateful siege of contraries." Good hurts him now. "*Only in destroying* he finds ease" to his relentless thoughts. The phrase marks his passage into complete evil. Envy of man, and disdain, injured by man, deepen, and deepen to greater baseness; and when he enters the serpent, the passage (163-178) in which he describes his own "foul descent," that he who contended with God should "imbrute his essence mixed with bestial slime;" in which he confesses that ambition and revenge descend to basest things; in which the recklessness of pure spite rescues him from the shame of this touch of self-knowledge—is Milton's summing up of Satan's moral degradation.

One last flicker of the lamp of goodness flares up in him, and then dies, when he is—Bk. ix. 460-79—surprised out of his evil thoughts by the beauty of Eve—

> "Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
> Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge."

But the "hot hell within him" soon consumes his delight, and Milton makes emphatic the reason why Satan lost the remnants of goodness by repeating the phrase—

> "Save what is in destroying, other joy
> To me is lost."

That is his ruin. He loses all good in destroying good that has not wronged him. It is his second fall,

his complete moral degradation. The speech in Hell and the monstrous change that follows mark this as

being. He is reconceived for the occasion. He is the liar, the hypocrite, the gray dissimulator, weak in power, intellectual still, but having only the intellect of the sophist and the rhetorician, moved easily to ill-temper, all his loftiness gone, a beaten foe from the beginning. Only in one strange passage is there a recollection of the great figure and spirit of *Paradise Lost*. It is where penitence comes upon him for an instant, where the soul-subduing power of Christ's gentleness affects him, a brief moment, for he recovers instantly, unable to free himself from himself. But in it we hear the old music and the old thoughts, and touch the old character we know so well in the great epic. This curious passage is well worth study—Book III. 203-222.

Paradise Regained, with **Samson Agonistes**, was published by John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleet Street, 1671. It was licensed in July, 1670; entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in September, 1670, and the second edition of it appeared in 1680.

by Ellwoo

Chalfont,

Paradise Lost On returning it, "he asked me how I liked it and what I thought of it, which I modestly but freely told him, and after some further discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?' He made me no answer, but sate for some time in a muse, then brake off that discourse and fell into another subject." When the Plague was over, Milton came back to London, and Ellwood calling on him, "He showed me," he says "his second poem, called *Paradise Regained*, and i

a pleasant tone said to me, 'This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.'"

We know, then, from this that the poem was finished in 1666, before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, and that it remained four years in manuscript. Unlike *Paradise Lost*, which lay simmering in Milton's mind for nearly thirty years, *Paradise Regained* was the swift conception and birth of a year. There is no trace of it in the subjects jotted down in earlier days. It bears the marks of haste; but we may say that it is contained in *Paradise Lost*. It is, in fact, the sequel of that poem—rather a codicil than a sequel. The subject of the great epic was the disobedience of man in temptation, and the consequent loss of Paradise to all mankind. The subject of *Paradise Regained* is the reversal of this—the obedience of man in temptation, and the recovery thereby of Paradise to all mankind. Many useless pages have been written on the strangeness of applying the title to the one event of the temptation and victory of Christ. The reason lies on the face of the thing. It suited Milton as a poet to contrast temptation with temptation. The moment he heard the phrase Paradise Found, the subject in its form leaped to its feet before his inward eye. He liked his work himself; but only the origin for the common belief that he preferred it to *Paradise Lost* is the passage in Phillips' life:—"It is generally censured to be much inferior to the other, though he (Milton) could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him"—words which may simply mean that Milton was wearied by his critics.

The poem shares in the epic character and dignity of *Paradise Lost*. Both are reflected on it from its predecessor. The slightness and inequality (almost half of the book is given to one temptation) of the treatment of the subject, the want of care which we feel in many parts, the frequent pedestrianism of the

style, the maimed movement of some of the verses, the heavy and occasionally inadequate reasoning, the picture of Satan and Christ attacking one another like two disputants in the schools, lessen the dignity of the [illegible] of [illegible] arg [illegible] movement over the classical themes of Rome and Athens, and over great moral questions; and the noble way in which Nature is brought in to enhance, contrast, or illustrate the story and its thoughts—secure its dignity. A few gentle and homely pictures, with more of the charm of common earth than any in *Paradise Lost*, touch it with tenderness. Its note is not the note of *Paradise Lost*, which is Fall; it is the note of victory, but the too argumentative treatment robs it of the triumphant spirit which Milton desired to give it. At its root its subject is the same as that of *Paradise Lost*. It is the "great duel" between good in man and evil without him—that recurring, attractive subject which underlies almost all national epics and all great tragedy, which no poet of humanity has ever been able to avoid, and which, treated in different ways by Milton in *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*, ought to be enough to free him from the charge of being wanting in "humanism," if his intense and dominating individuality is not enough to do so. The error of the poem is not in the sameness of the subject, but in the treatment of the same subject a second time on the same lines. That he succeeds at all in the poem manifests his power; that he fails in the invention, energy, brightness, and beauty of *Paradise Lost*, and that the movement is heavier and more retarded, is only to be expected. The very verse shares in the inevitable languor of a man doing a second time the thing he has already done with his full force. We ask, and ask more than once, Where is the ear that heard and composed the harmonies *Paradise Lost*?

Book I.—It begins with a proem like one of the old mysteries. There are three pictures: of the Baptist and Christ at the Jordan; of Satan holding his gloomy consistory in mid air and of his going forth to tempt Christ; of the Father in Heaven speaking to Gabriel of the Son's victory over Satan. Milton, in his manner, thus fills his theatre with expectant witnesses, all concentrating their interest on the great duel now at hand.

The main story is well introduced by the wandering away of Christ, lost in thought:

> "*Thought following thought, and step by step led on,*"

into the desert. The long self-conscious soliloquy of Christ, in which he tells the story of his past life, strikes a false note; and is unnatural in one whose eyes were on the present and the future. The picture of the Saviour in the wilderness; the sudden introduction of Satan, as an aged peasant, to illustrate his gray dissimulation; and the swift outbreak of the Fiend into his true character, as if here also touched with Ithuriel's spear, are all finely wrought. The first temptation is then offered to Christ, but treated so lightly that we see that Milton had no idea of its meaning. The conversation which follows, being founded on no clear view of the situation, is heavy, and loses the solemnity of the hour and the personages in its scolding tone on one side, and its smooth and abject flattery on the other.

Book II. opens with a homely picture of the disciples of Christ, "close in a cottage," praying for his return; and with another, touched with tender motherhood, of Mary awaiting it; and with a third of Satan again in council with his peers (as in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, but how different in power!), in which Belial advises to "set woman in his eye and in his walk," and Satan answers in a passage, full of Milton's classic memories, and therefore full of poetry. All the three pictures are used to carry the mind forward to the lonely figure of Christ in the wilderness and

to increase the importance of the coming action. Immediately we find ourselves with Christ hungering as the night falls. The dreams, happily suggested by his hunger, his waking, the description of the fresh morning and the birds and the hill top and the pleasant grove beneath, are pure and lovely poetry. It is delightful to come upon the passage. It is in this grove that Milton doubles the first temptation by making Satan set before Christ tables piled with rich foods and wines [illegible] a picture which only his [illegible]

[illegible]

ornate manner what has been [illegible] inconsistency. Satan has manner, and it involves an inconsistency. Satan has told Belial that Christ must be tempted by manlier objects that have a show of worth, and satisfy only the lawful desires of nature. But now, in the teeth of his opinion, he sets before Christ all the dainties of the world, tempting him beyond the lawful desires of nature. But the truth is, Milton not having formed a clear idea of the temptation, tried to get one by repeating himself, and the Nemesis of unintelligent repetition fell upon him. Christ's answer—I have a right to all things, I will not take your gifts—has no meaning, unless that Christ wished to say that the gratification of appetite was nothing to him. But that has been said before in the First Book, and Satan himself had said it In fact, this new picture, however poetically worked out, lowers the whole idea of the subject, makes the subtilty of the Devil commonplace, and so weakens the temptation; and degrades the lofty image which Milton wishes to give of the Saviour.

The second temptation, that on the mountain, now begins at the end of Book II. 406. It was that Christ should win his kingdom by worship of the Devil, that is, by using evil means in order to attain it. Milton understands this, and his success in this part of the poem is owing to his clear conception of his subject. For, when a poet possesses that, he works

with unconscious rightness; when he does not, his work will be wrong in treatment, in ornament, in everything, and the more he attempts to finish it, the more wrong it will become. Here, the conception is right, and carries everything with it. The conversation is easy, the treatment is noble, it grows and swells to a climax, the transitions are well managed, the ornament is fitting, and the natural scenery adds force to the thoughts and to the conclusion. The subject Milton had to treat was in itself noble—wealth, honour, arms, arts, and their kingdoms, set over against the kingdom of Christ.

It begins before Satan, in the next book, brings Christ to the "specular mount." High designs, high actions are your aim, the Tempter says, and for these riches are needful.

> "Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
> They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
> While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."

The answer is well worth reading for its high and grave morality, for its fine passage on riches, "the toil of fools, the wise man's cumbrance," for the political allusions to the kingship then in England, and for the old Miltonic strain of Temperance in it, such as we have listened to in *Comus*.

Book III. opens with the temptation of Fame. "So wise in counsel for wisdom, in skill of conduct in war, why deprive thyself of glory?" The answer is full of interest. The lines at 50-60 do not say much for Milton's republican views. They have the same half-contempt that Shakspere had for the mob, and they sound strange in the mouth of Christ. The definition of true glory is the same as that in *Lycidas*. The scorn and wrath of Milton fill the lines which paint the conquerors who left ruin behind them, and were called Gods: and we cannot but feel that it is himself, the grave and stern republican, to whom we listen. Nor less do we hear him in the episode of thought that follows when Satan, saying, "Think not

so slight of glory; therein least resembling thy great Father," is answered by Christ, not out of Puritanic theology, but out of the heart of the poet, that God exacts glory from men—

> "Not for glory as prime end,
> But to show forth his goodness, and impart
> His good communicable to every soul
> Freely."

The next appeal is direct to Christ's kingdom. "Israel is enslaved, zeal for thy Father's house, duty to free thy country urge thee on. Verify the prophets." The answer runs on principles that filled the whole of Milton's life. "All things are best fulfilled in their due time." "Who best can suffer, best can do, best reign, who first well hath obeyed." At the end comes that strange passage elsewhere noted in which Satan would fain hide in the kindness of Christ. But the Tempter soon changing, passes by an easy transition to a further trial, and now brings Christ to the specular mount. The landscape is very largely and nobly set forth, and all Assyria is described, and in splendid verse the march and armament of the Parthian host. All Milton is back again with us in a line like this,

> "Chariots, or elephants endorst with towers."

"Jewry lies between Rome and Parthia: one or other thou must choose for ally, wouldst thou hold thy kingdom. Choose Parthia, I will gain it for thee."

Book IV.—Rejected, Satan now returns to the same temptation in another form. He shows the Saviour Rome; tells him of the monster Tiberius, how easy to expel him: "Aim therefore at no less than all the world—then David's throne is thine." The description of "great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth," has in its verse alone a majesty worthy of the city; and so vivid is it that we almost behold Rome restored in it, and the conflux at her gates, nay, all the world gathered round her. In a long succession of verses, name after name of peoples, seas, and isles strike upon our ear, until in the magic

mirror of the poet we see all nations, near and far, bringing their homage and their wealth along the Roman roads to the centre of the world. Christ answers by arraigning the luxury of Rome; by mocking, with perhaps a touch of scorn from Milton when he thought of the embassies that congratulated the Restoration, at the hollow lies of ambassadors; by tossing one scornful line at Tiberius—

"Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out;"

and by a burst of eloquent wrath into which suddenly rushes Milton's republicanism, 144–153. Then the tempter, baffled and wrought to rage—and the way in which the anger of failure makes him throw down the mask, is one of the finest things in the book—turns on Christ and says—"All this is mine, thou shalt have it, if thou wilt worship me." He is answered in the words of Scripture. The proposal and the answer are not well brought in. They are made an incident only in the temptation, when they are the idea of the

sterner form of it which condemned all amusement and set aside all literature but the Bible. It is strange to step out of the enamelled verse of the Renaissance into the unadorned virtue of the Puritan; but it is contrasts of this kind which give half their interest, apart from poetry, to the work and life of Milton. The heart of the firmest and best Puritanism is expressed in the lines 286–290. The rest is an attack on Greek philosophy. It is curious to find the youth who honoured Plato saying in old age—"The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits." It is bolder still to say that all Greek philosophy was little else than dreams, and that Hebrew poetry is higher than the Greek. But Milton put only one side of his mind into the mouth of Christ; the other side we have had already in the mouth of Satan.

The answer confounds the Tempter, who in his baffled wrath asks—Since wealth and glory, and the empire of the world, and arms and arts delight thee not, what dost thou in the world? the wilderness for thee is fittest place. I found thee there, and thither will return thee Then comes that noble passage where all that is sublime in storm is followed by all that is soft in morning peace, in one of those strong contrasts that Milton loved to make, 410–438. It is Milton's fine poetic way of putting the result of the whole temptation into the mouth of Nature. The storm is the rage of force and subtle intellect—the [illegible] nst him; the victory, and

The tempest is then made the ground of another trial, the trial of fear of ill. "The storm presages thy fate, let it warn thee"—a warning sternly thrown back by Christ. The last temptation is then finely introduced. It seems to be suddenly conceived by Satan, who doubts whether Christ be the Son of God—I am also God's son, all men are; thou more perhaps, but that I will now prove—and he places Christ on the highest pinnacle of the temple.

> "Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
> Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God."

And Christ

> "Tempt not the Lord thy God. He said, and stood;
> But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell."

This is cleverly put, but it is theatrical. As in the case of the first temptation, so here Milton is driven into sensationalism because he did not understand his subject. The additions he makes to the story in the Gospel violate the meaning of the story. Even with the additions, he could find no ideas on which his imagination could truly employ itself in this temptation, and he only glances over it. He gives it thirty lines. He gives 900 lines to the second, the idea of which he did understand. The fulness with which the one, and the slightness with which the other is treated is a curious instance of the difference which a clear or a vague conception of a subject makes in the work of a poet.

The end has now come—angels bear the Saviour away and feed him from the Tree of Life. They sing the triumph of *Paradise Regained*, and Christ

> "Home to his mother's house private returned."

Samson Agonistes (the wrestler), written, it is most likely, after 1667, was published in 1671. In the MS. notes of 1640 there are many subjects drawn from the life of Samson—*Samson Pursophorus* or *Hybristes* or *Samson Marrying* or *Ramath-Lechi*, and lastly *Dagonalia*. A Preface was put to the *Agonistes*, in which Milton, knowing that his party abhorred the stage, apologises for his use of the dramatic form by dwelling on the nobleness of Tragedy among the Greeks, and distinguishes his drama from the stage plays of the day. The *Agonistes* is built then on the Greek model, and is more in the manner of Euripides than of Sophocles. It has the didactiveness of Euripides, and his long

movement, and his want of dramatic talk and play—the dialogues are debates—and his want of vivid characterisation. It has less of tearful human pathos than Euripides had, but it has more of heroic pathos.

Milton returns then, in this piece, to his early preference for the dramatic form. But the whole temper of his genius was now changed. The difference between the *Comus* and *Samson* is all the difference between youth and age; between a young man's ideal philosophy and a grown man's knowledge of the world; between the writing of one who foresaw, and one who looked back on, a great political and religious struggle in which his world was changed; between the spirit of the Renaissance, mixed with the spirit of Puritanism, and a Puritanism, the form of which alone was Greek. Virtue, in *Comus*, is a young girl, the Lady of the Church of England; it may be the Lady of Purity in Milton's own soul, whom, after a struggle, eternal Righteousness would deliver. Virtue, in *Samson*, is a fallen, but repentant man, who rests on Divine strength and wins the victory—the Puritanism which now in England could only purify its past by a noble death, and leave, in so dying, its country free. One thing remained unchanged—the basis of the two dramas. In both the battle between good and evil is set in array; in both the good triumphs, in both it is the sovereignty of God's righteousness which helps the weakness of Man.

We understand well why Milton chose this subject in his later years He could, without much danger or offence, express in it, as in an allegory, the personal and political position, the retrospect and the hopes, of himself and his party. Like Samson, both he and Puritanism had been dedicated to God and to a pure and temperate life, and both had smitten the Philistines with mighty blows Both had been deserted by the army and England at the time when they were fighting hardest, as Samson had been by Israel, 265-275. In his own life Milton had

married a Philistine woman, and had suffered indignities; and England had been lured away from her republican and Puritan life by the blandishments and splendour of the Dalila of the Restoration. Milton was now blind, compassed round by foes, among strange faces, in a land that seemed strange,—and so was the captive Puritanism of England. The Philistines heaped indignities on him and those he honoured. See the possible allusion to the treatment of Cromwell's body, 368. They mocked the poet and his cause. But Milton had endless faith in that final victory of good over evil which is the burden of all his great poems; and the close of *Samson Agonistes* is the old warrior's prophecy of the triumph of his cause. Though dying he cried "Be of good courage," and Samson goes forth to death, declaring that God will vindicate His righteousness.

It is owing to the strong personal and historical element in this drama, and to the solemn feeling with which we cannot but listen to the last words of the greatest Englishman of his time, speaking almost alone in heroic faith, that *Samson Agonistes* has deserved to gain, even more than by its poetic excellence, the reverence and sympathy of Englishmen.

The Drama.—"Tragedy," Milton writes, translating Aristotle, "is of power, by raising pity, and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions; that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing these passions well imitated." It is on the ground of this statement that the *Samson Agonistes* is to be explained.

Samson, on whom our eyes are to be fixed throughout, is introduced at once in Milton's deliberate and pictorial manner—

> "A little onward lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, a little further on."

However Milton may linger in the action of any of his themes, he enters at the beginning into the

midst of his subject. The whole position is given in the first twenty-two lines; and our pity is immediately stirred for Samson's bodily distress and for his mind that had "no ease from restless thoughts, like hornets armed." The Miltonic manner is just as marked in what follows. The retrospection of Samson; the way in which he reasons over, rather than feels over, his past; his argument with himself in an inward debate; the justification of God with which the argument ends;—we have already frequently met in the characters of *Paradise Lost*. Out of the reasoning arises, at line 67, an outburst of pathetic and sublime woe; worthy of a hero, worthy of Milton, whose voice we hear throughout mingling his cries with Samson's, in verse mighty as the man and his grief. We are lifted into the heart of pity; but the repetition of the same thoughts in an argumentative form, at line 90, lowers, in Milton's too common way, the pitch of passion and pathos

The Chorus now come in, treading softly, and their first words, direct and simple as if they were Greeks, deepen pity, and add to it still more by the contrast they draw between Samson's present and his past. Through their song and the conversation which follows, in which the story of his life is told, Samson is made to grow up before us as the Great Wrestler with the Philistines, the irresistible Agonist, but with this image in sharp contrast, the secret misery of the man is revealed, his failure in his divine work, his weakness and shame. The tale of Dalila serves as motive for her after introduction, and the chorus, dwelling on one of Milton's favourite themes, the justification of God's ways to men, closes this part of the Drama In it Milton has made Samson's figure fill the canvas, and he has made our pity for him great. But he has also so wrought his work—and this is true of all that comes after—as to expand and dignify the catastrophe We know beforehand the end, and the poet, supposing that we know it, puts in numberless touches w[illegible]efer

to that end, and which, through our knowledge of it, thrill us with pity or terror; while the sense we have that the actors, not knowing the conclusion, do not understand the weight of their own sayings, increases the excitement with which we anticipate the closing terror.

The entrance of Manoa is used for the same purposes. His sorrow deepens our pity; his dwelling on his son's weakness, not able now "To save himself against a coward armed," makes us look forward through contrast to the end. As the talk goes on between Manoa and his son, Samson rises out of physical into religious heroism. He defends, even to his own self-blame, God's justice, against Manoa; even his self-contempt is magnificent, nor less the verse in which it is told. Manoa thinks his son most shamed, in that this feast to Dagon is his doing, a feast whereby God is disglorified. Samson confesses that this is his chief affliction, the anguish of his soul; but now the contest is no longer between him and Dagon, but between God and Dagon; and he cries out that God will not delay to vindicate his deity. This is the ground of the old heroism of Israel and of the Puritans; the ground of all Milton's religious thought, of *Comus*, and *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained;* the sublimest of all motives, immeasurable faith in the victory of God.

> "Dagon shall stoop, and shall ere long receive
> Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him."

We hear, as it were, the sound of the great catastrophe in the air. But the note of the dialogue changes now, lest we should lose pity. Manoa will seek ransom for his son, but Samson will not have it; his punishment is deserved. Nay, God will pardon, answers Manoa, and restore thee to thy home. His pardon I implore, cries Samson, but as for life, to what end should I seek it? pride and pleasure have turned me out ridiculous, despoiled. The chorus say that he was temperate. Temperate at

one gate, he answers, but not at another. Now "blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled," old age and disease will craze his limbs. Strength, he is told, God's gift, is still with him; but then the presentiment of death steals over him; he feels his genial spirits droop; and we are startled by hearing in the midst of Samson's words the piteous but solemn cry of Milton himself,

> "Nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of herself;
> My race of glory run, and race of shame,
> And I shall shortly be with them at rest"

These are the motives of the dialogue, and we do not see at first how fine it is; how it purifies our minds—

[illegible]

minds are further purified by the satisfaction of pity. The chorus, dwelling on the misfortunes and changes of human life, enlarges the same feelings. We hear Milton's voice again in it, concerning himself in a beautiful passage, 660-666, concerning his party, and their fall, and their sorrows, throughout the rest of the lines. It is nobly, but austerely written, and the verse is rude, even to displeasure At the end, the sudden change in the movement of the rhythm, which becomes almost gay, when the chorus paints vividly Dalila's approach, contrasts finely, as Dalila herself does, with the rude verse and the rude sufferings which have been described

Two episodes, if I may use the term, now interrupt the main action [illegible]
Both serve to [illegible]
Samson, and to [illegible]
our pity and [illegible]
first he triumphs over the glozing lies and wiles of Dalila. He is no longer seen as weakened by passion and its slave. In the second he triumphs by the

and proud tyranny of Harapha. He is s
image of divine strength in contrast with
His position (in idea) is the same as C
the Tempter offers him the tyranny.

Dalila is drawn with laborious judgme
effects are carefully studied. The dialog
much dialogue as a violent debate betwee
in Milton's mind. She is Milton's portra
and hateful woman, treacherous, lying, hav
and the beauty of the flesh, vilely curious, fal
cunning, a hypocrite in love and in patrio
religion, deceiving through the sorcery of l
within, a manifest serpent. The chorus, i
in verse and expression, is Milton's most c
most ferocious assault on evil womanhood.

The episode of Harapha follows. H
the semblance of mindless force and its v
fulness; the tongue-doughty giant; the
Paradise Lost in another form. The ch
out this idea more fully. They praise Gc
he puts invincible might into men,

> "To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppr
> The brute and boisterous force of violent r
> Hardy and industrious to support
> Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
> The righteous, and all such as honour truth

The sole importance of the scene is tha
amson in our eyes and gives occasion t
hich has all the grandeur, the solemnity
imple motives of a Psalm of David's. T
f the personal touch at the end is very be

> "But sight bereaved
> May chance to number thee with thos
> Whom patience finally must crown."

n the next scene, when the "officer"
amson's presence at the games, and the
efused, the interest of the audience, bec
now the end, is intended to be further stin

the messenger; the swift statement of the death; the iron joy of the father, his great cry—"What glorious hand gave Samson his death-wound?"—all, all is admirable. Nor does the almost epic narration of the messenger, which after all the storm brings us into quiet—quiet fitted for the solemn telling of a great deed—lower, but dignify the close. The Chorus and Semi-chorus sing the praise of the dearly-bought revenge. There is a wild clashing, like that of cymbals, in their words, but the song is not quite on a level with Milton's power. The true close is the speech of Manoa, a pure and noble and lovely piece of work; fixing our minds on the heroic life and death; on the revenge which has purified Samson's weakness; on the honour and freedom left to Israel; on God with his son in death—

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

And the final picture of his grave leads us, after all this pity and terror, into a world of still and solemn poetry. The chorus says the last word. It is Milton's last word on Samson and his cause, on himself and Puritanism. With "peace and consolation" God had dismissed his servant from the storms of life, with "calm of mind, all passion spent."

But *Samson Agonistes* has more than a personal or a party interest. Its literary position is unique. Written in blank verse, in the old English spirit, in the old classic manner, it is a stranger among the dramas of the Restoration, which were written in rhyme, in the new French spirit, in a form which wore the garments but had not the heart of the classic plays. On the other hand, written in 1674, it is an unexpected resurrection of that great Elizabethan Drama which began its mighty youth in *Tamburlaine* and had died before the Restoration. It is divided from both Dramas by its religion, its ideal morality, and its republicanism—

in one word, by its Puritanism. But by race and descent, by dramatic seriousness and literary manner, by the imaginative force with which it is conceived, by the peculiarity of the classical colouring and the metrical forms, by the English and the construction of the English, by its allegorical turn, by the spirit which fills its poetry, and above all, by its note of passion, however grave that passion be, *Samson Agonistes* is the last expression, born out of due time, of the Elizabethan Tragedy. In its relation, alike to the Drama that preceded and surrounded it, it resembles one of those fortress-rocks which, the expiring effort of the energy of the Alpine chain, stands apart in the plain of Lombardy, and frowns upon a world in which it is a stranger. Like it, too, Milton and his work remain apart in lonely grandeur. In one aspect, he had no predecessor and no follower. And we, who attempt, at so vast a distance, to look up to the height in which he sits with Homer and Dante, feel we may paint the life, but hardly dare to analyse the work, of the great Singer and Maker whose name shines only less brightly than Shakspere's on the long and splendid roll of the poets of England.

MILTON! THOU SHOULDST BE LIVING AT THIS HOUR:
ENGLAND HATH NEED OF THEE: SHE IS A FEN
OF STAGNANT WATERS: ALTAR, SWORD, AND PEN,
FIRESIDE, THE HEROIC WEALTH OF HALL AND BOWER
HAVE FORFEITED THEIR ANCIENT ENGLISH DOWER
OF INWARD HAPPINESS. WE ARE SELFISH MEN:
OH! RAISE US UP, RETURN TO US AGAIN
AND GIVE US MANNERS, FREEDOM, VIRTUE, POWER.
THY SOUL WAS LIKE A STAR AND DWELT APART:
THOU HADST A VOICE WHOSE SOUND WAS LIKE THE SEA,
PURE AS THE NAKED HEAVENS, MAJESTIC, FREE,
SO DIDST THOU TRAVEL ON LIFE'S COMMON WAY
IN CHEERFUL GODLINESS: AND YET THY HEART
THE LOWLIEST DUTIES ON HERSELF DID LAY.

the messenger; the swift statement of the death; the iron joy of the father, his great cry—"What glorious hand gave Samson his death-wound?"—all, all is admirable. Nor does the almost epic narration of the messenger, which after all the storm brings us into quiet—quiet fitted for the solemn telling of a great deed—lower, but dignify the close. The Chorus and Semi-chorus sing the praise of the dearly-bought revenge. There is a wild clashing, like that of cymbals, in their words, but the song is not quite on a level with Milton's power. The true close is the speech of Manoa, a pure and noble and lovely piece of work; fixing our minds on the heroic life and death; on the revenge which has purified Samson's weakness; on the honour and freedom left to Israel; on God with his son in death—

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

1608. Milton born, Dec. 9.
1620. To St. Paul's School.
1625. To Cambridge.
James I. died.
1626. *On a Fair Infant.*
1628. *Vacation Exercise.*
1629. B.A. *Nativity Ode.*
1630. *The Circumcision; The Passion; On Time; At a Solemn Music; Epitaph on Shakspere.*
1631. *Ep. on Hobson* and on *MSS. of Winchester; May Morning.*
1632. M.A. Cambridge, *Sonnet I.*; Retires to Horton, *Sonnet II.*
1633. *Arcades; L'Allegro; Il Penseroso?*
1634. *Comus* acted.
1635. M.A. Oxford.
1637. *Lycidas.*
1638. Continental Journey; *Italian Sonnets.*
1639. *Epitaphium Damonis.*
1640. Long Parliament.
1641. *Of Reformation in England; Prelatical Episcopacy; Reason of Church Government; Animadversions;* Grand Remonstrance.
1642. *Apology for Smectymnuus;* Civil War; Battle of Edgehill.
1643 Marries Mary Powell; Battles of Chalgrove and Newbury; Deaths of Hampden and Pym.
1644. Marston Moor; *Education Tract; Areopagitica; Two Divorce Tracts.*
1645. *Last Two Divorce Tracts;* Battle of Naseby.
1646. Publication of Poems.
1648. Second Civil War; *Ps. LXXX.–VII*
1649. Charles I. executed: *Tenure of Kings an Magistrates; On Ormond's Peace; Eikonoclastes;* Latin Secretary.
1651. *Defensio pro popul Anglicano;* Battle o Worcester.
1653. Long Parliament dissolved; *Ps. I.–VIII.* Death of Milton' first wife; Protectorate.
1654. *Defensio secunda.*
1655. *Pro se Defensio.*
1656. Marries Catherin Woodcock.
1657. Cromwell installed a Protector.
1658. Death of Milton's secon Wife; Raleigh' *Cabinet Council* Death of Cromwell.
1659. *Civil Power in Eccles Causes; Way to Re move Hirelings; De claration of Fre Commonwealth;* R Cromwell resigns.
1660. *Ready and Easy Way t Establish Free Com monwealth;* Th Restoration.
1664. Milton marries Eli Minshull.
1667. *Paradise Lost.*
1669. *History of England.*
1671. *Paradise Regained Samson Agonistes.*
1672. *Artis Logicæ.*
1673. *Of True Religio Heresy and Schism* Early Poems repub lished.
1674. Paradise Lost, 2n Edition; *Epist. Fam iliares; Academic Ex ercises;* Death, Nov 8; Burial, Nov. 12.

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